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ARTHUR KENNELLY

SPARKS JOURNAL

SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS, INC

RECORDING THE EARLY HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIRELESS

VOLUME 4, No. 3

- QUARTERLY -

PIONEER WIRELESS WOMEN



THE PIONEER WIRELESS WOMEN

It was Rudyard Kipling who characterized woman as... "a rag and a bone and a hank of hair" while Hannah Cowley called them... "one of Nature's agreeable blunders".

Few of the 'fair sex' had ventured into the watery Kingdom of King Neptune whose minions of old sea dogs had received their Maledictory Licenses from Davy Jones himself.

A distinctive language of the sea prevails along all the littorals of the world. From prehistoric times through the development of the oar, sail and steam power, diverse personalities — explorers, fishermen, buccaneers, traders — have contributed to the lingo of the sailor. It is the venacular of a hard life — a life of great demands, of grand traditions — and its terms are correspondingly rugged, terse, picturesque and perhaps romantic.

Tradition and habit are hard to change. Old salts who sailed the 'tall ships' — "wind-lammers" many called them — were not about to change the status quo of the early day of sail without a struggle when Fulton's steam engine started to make inroads into their ranks. It was a losing battle — The 'Age of Steam' took over.

After the steam engine came new science and technology — mostly resisted by the seamen, especially those of the 'old school'. Unfortunately, when the Wireless was introduced, it was taken as a 'plaything' and most navigators had little time for the new gadgetry. Most skippers 'tolerated' the new equipment and the Marconimen and the Wirelessmen sent along to operate it — however, they did not trust it. Not a few thought it eroded their authority as the home office could now tap them on the shoulder via wireless.

The engineers had endured the transition too from sail to steam, but it left a mark on some of them. The new mode — wireless was an invasion of their prerogatives or so many of them felt. Perhaps many shipboard generators were too small but more than a few Chief Engineers felt the extra juice from their generators was the last straw and there have been many 'hassels, aboard ships when the engineer pulled the switch' as Sparks was at last clearing the hook!

Wireless and radio-telegraphy had been a 'man's field' for the first decade of its existence. It was not until 1910 that Miss Graynella Packer became the FIRST WOMAN MARINE OPERATOR in the United States. She was followed the following year by Miss Tucker and Miss Edith Coombs. In 1912 came Miss Maybelle Kelso. Many followed in their footsteps as the Story of Women Operators was narrated in Cmdr. Karl H. W. Baarslag's book "SOS TO THE RESCUE". Cmdr. Baarslag is a charter member and former officer in the Society.

Women were accepted graciously by most men who pounded brass on ships but of course there were 'holdouts' who felt that the women were invading their private domain. Baarslag reports that only about 40 women operators had gone to sea on ships as marine operators up to the early 1940's and only half of them commercially. The need for operators was so great after the start of WW-2 that many young ladies joined the ranks of the WAC's and other government agencies serving with distinction.

While our member Olive J. Roekner (SWOP-2891) is not a "Pioneer" in our field, we have selected her story as we think it is exceedingly interesting and typifies the experience of many of her sex who have gone to sea.

She, like others, has found life as a Radio Officer exciting and rewarding. She is now retired but frequently recalls the nostalgic memories and the refreshing thrill of recalling experiences on ships which have long since sailed into the mists of time. We take this occasion to Salute our distaff members. They have demonstrated skill and ability under pressure and adverse conditions and have turned in an excellent record. We are happy to include them and have them share our distinguished heritage. **THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THEM.**

—William A. Breniman — Publisher



Miss Packer, the first woman marine wireless operator on SS. Mohawk, 1910



Courtesy of H. J. Hughes

BY

LOUISA B. SANDO

WSRZJ

One evening not long after World War II had ended in the Pacific, the U.S. Army Hospital Ship *Chateau Thierry* slipped quietly into the lagoon at Eniwetok. As she took her place among the many warships, the radio operator on duty contacted the shore station by blinker. After completing the ship's business the shore operator queried by blinker, "Are you WAC?"

"Yes," came the blinker reply from the *Chateau Thierry*. Instantly 150 ships moored in the lagoon, whose operators had been "reading the mail" were furiously blinking for a contact. The three WAC operators aboard the *Chateau Thierry* spent the remainder of the night at three blinker stations in QSO with the OM ops on other ships moored in the area. Some of the fellows had been in the Pacific nearly two years. After establishing home state and city, the next question from the lonely GIs inevitably was, "Are you blonde or brunette?"

Such is the reception that has been met by the girls who have gone down to the sea in a man's job—that of radio operator, or "sparks."

From the time the first "sparkette" sailed in 1910 to the present day, fewer than thirty women have held this job on ships flying the United States flag—and half that number were WAC's on wartime duty. To all these girl operators goes credit for being real pioneers in a field traditionally masculine.

Pioneer Girl Marine Operators

In one chapter of his book "SOS to the Rescue," Karl Baarslag has recorded experiences of some of the earliest girl marine radio operators during the years 1910-1929. Some of the following details are from this book.

In the year 1910 Miss Graynella Packer became America's first woman marine operator. She had some Western Union experience, and applied for a position as wireless operator with the United Wireless Co. Officials were skeptical—a woman operator was unheard of. But an Atlantic coastwise passenger line felt that a "wireless woman" might be good publicity. As yet no government license was required and after short training with the chief operator at old station "NY" atop 42 Broadway in New York, Miss Packer got the job of "sparks" on the S.S. *Mohawk* in Nov. 1910.

Men operators aboard other ships accepted her graciously and helped her in every way they could. But the news spread fast—a woman wireless operator—and Graynella was in her glory. Newspaper reporters and writers be-

(Continued on Page 4)

TOP PANELS

FEATURING

OLIVER HEAVISIDE

ARTHUR EDWIN KENNELLY

TURN TO PAGE THIRTY NINE

READ — RAY ZERBE'S LOG — Starts Page 24

(An Amazing WW-1 Record of Radio on Atlantic Troop Convoys)





SPARKS JOURNAL USPS 365-050

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(SUBJECT PERIODIC ELECTIONS)



## Book Reviews

### - THE BIG SHIP -



THE STORY OF THE S.S. UNITED STATES  
BY - FRANK O. BRAYNARD

PUBLISHER: THE MARINER'S MUSEUM, NEWPORT NEWS VA.  
283-Pages - Illustrated - Price \$25.00 - Printed Aug. 10 1921

The S.S. UNITED STATES represents the fulfillment of a lifelong dream of its designer, William Francis Gibbs. Her career on the North Atlantic added, if possible, still further luster to the life-story of a remarkable man. Rarely in any field of accomplishment has a man been able to dream so well and to make his dream come true so fully.



Frank O. Braynard on board the UNITED STATES, July 12, 1978.

Photo by Alexander C. Brown

There were tremendous obstacles. The era of the Great Liner was nearly past. Above all, maritime labor atmosphere was very bad and would prove the ship's 'achilles heel'. The book tells the story of "The Big Ship" as she was known in the offices of Biggs and Cox where she was designed. It is a story that even now may not be ended. The S.S. United States was launched in 1952, drydocked in 1980 and passed with flying colors. Her hull plates seemed almost like new. So "Here's to the safest liner ever built, the fastest big ship ever and one of the world's masterpieces. LONG MAY SHE SAIL IN PEACE.

### [Editor's Note ]

Elmer Burgman

Mr. Frank O. Braynard is perhaps one of the most prolific authors of marine subjects in the world - especially ships that sailed the "Western Ocean." He is an accomplished artist and has drawn many sketches of the "BIG SHIPS" of which he writes so knowledgeable. We are happy to mention that Mr. Braynard is one of the Society's Honorary Members (18-H).

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7. SEVEN YEARS A WIRELESS GIRL - Olive J. Roeckner
13. SEA-GOING EXPERIENCES OF A YL RADIO OPERATOR - By Kiristi Jenkins Smith.
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21. "The Wireless Operator was a Lady" (Smalley)
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22. SPECIAL STUDIES - The Women's Army Corps (WACS)
23. HALIFAX - LAST STOP NORTH ATLANTIC CONVOYS - By O. R. Mosher
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15. "FUNSTON'S GALLERY (Flip side of Wireless History as Cartooned by a Master of the art)
16. "ODE TO WEATHER GAL" ( Linda Carole Gialanella - WNEW - NY. Metromedia - By Brenda Grummet)

Like **MEMBERSHIP..**  
It doesn't COST: It PAYS!



## The Founders Page



WILLIAM A. BRENNIMAN

## HISTORY OF THE WIRELESS

It is the dedicated purpose and consummate desire of the Founder of your Society to build an organization of members who will join in the 'common effort' of collecting, researching and recording the History of Communications - especially that which relates to Hertzian waves and the "Wireless" or radio-telegraph mode of the art.

We feel that we have achieved a measure of success in our undertaking having received a number of awards and many letters of recognition and appreciation for the Historical material we have included in the SPARKS JOURNAL and other publications of the Society.

"Tempus Fugit"! Many of our Senior Spark-Gap Pioneers, SGP and Pioneer members have known and worked with Marconi, DeForest, Edison and others whose names have become world renown. Many have preserved clippings from magazines and papers, books, photos and memorabilia of the early days that historically are very valuable and should be preserved. Unfortunately, all too often, much of this is disposed of as 'junk' when members become 'Silent-Keys' as Relatives or Estate Administrators are not aware of its historical value. We urge all members to include instructions in wills or codicils to have such material delivered to the Society for its Reference Library and archives. This great wealth of irreplaceable material should, by all means, be preserved for posterity.

I do need the loyal support of all members in this undertaking, coupled with understanding of workload problems, personal limitations of health, innate ability and dexterity compounded by advancing years.

I am not overlooking the close bond that welds us together or the fellowship and fraternal aspect that membership enjoys. This will not be overlooked as we have been proudly called 'The Get-To-Gether' Society and we wish to keep it that way.

Beginning with this issue "SPARKS JOURNAL" will be mostly Historical in context. Of course our publications will be 'spiked' with a bit of 'levity' since the 'flip-side' also carries historical overtones and undertones in many ways. None of our members have ... gone to the moon or orbited space. However, the experiences and episodes of many members are sometimes ... 'stranger than fiction'.

I am reminded now and then that the caption we quite frequently use, ie: . . . "SINCE THE DAYS OF MARCONI" is incorrect because ... Marconi did not invent the wireless! It was (take your pick) Father Murgas, Alexander Popoff, Paul Nipkow, Nikola Tesla, Emile Berliner, Dr. Mahlon Loomis, Edison and many, many others.

According to our own Historian, Prof. Herbert Scott has researched the subject in depth. There were many fine engineers and scientists who have made contributions to the development of wireless. To mention a few, there were Fessenden, Brantly, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Preece, Sir Ambrose Fleming, Loomis, Popoff and of course Marconi himself. Many others worked in the field and helped to develop it with their ideas and inventions. These of course are separate and distinct from the basic works of Maxwell and Hertz.

While Marconi has been called the "Father of Wireless" by various people at times, he did NOT invent wireless per se. Whenever asked, he always vehemently denied that he 'invented wireless'. He modestly insisted that the only thing he did was to make PRACTICAL MODIFICATIONS on some of Hertz' ideas.

One of his experiments concerned the substitution of a relatively long antenna wire for Hertz' metallic squares on each end of his transmitting spark gap in his loop. Looking back, Marconi did have practical and commercial equipment in operation for some years before any of his peers. He was able to put it all together and merchandise it in a usable manner.

We have noted the saying: ... "History is who writes it, not who makes it". Historicity is very demanding. Innate fidelity and journalistic integrity are the characteristics by which one will be remembered. One must be careful of 'omission' which is almost as much a sin as 'truth is a virtue'.

We are of course bracketed by information available (plus time for research) so some allowance should be made. While we do not hold ourselves responsible for material furnished by members and others, we do reserve the right to request further information or background on some material that does not seem to square with the facts.

We have among our members, many who have authored books or historical papers and have furnished our library with copies from which we can draw when researching events and records. One which this issue makes timely is that of CMDR. KARL H. W. BAARSLAG who published "SOS TO THE RESCUE" in 1935. Karl is Member 175-SGP who joined the Society in 1968. He is at present one of the Society Officers.

Karl, no doubt, spent a great deal of time researching material for his new book back in 1935 and used recorded material which would be reliable and factual. Generally speaking, we believe most news has greater validity taken from records closer to date of such event than from records written years later as there is less chance of error than when recopied many times.

Historically speaking, Mr. Baarslag has made a great contribution in the field of Wireless History with his book ... "SOS TO THE RESCUE". He has been awarded Society's HONORARY MEMBERSHIP No. 19.

We will not attempt in this issue to list the names of members and others we feel merit such recognition and distinction of this award but it will be forthcoming in the near future.

We do wish to give special mention in this issue to Louisa B. Sando for the wealth of material on early day radio (mostly in the amateur field) in her book ... "CQ/YL" - published in 1958. Also worthy of special recognition is the carefully documented "day by day" history as it occurred on the convoy routes of the North Atlantic recorded and published in this Journal by member Raymond W. Zerbe, starting on Page 24. I think most will agree, after reading his story and log, that it is an outstanding chronicle of one important facet of our history during World War-1.

### Special Note :

We have given considerable thought to the composition or make-up of coming SPARKS JOURNALS. While 'Special Editions' such as the Bristol Bay, Pioneer Wireless Women, etc. permit the inclusion of more copy on a given subject and perhaps makes the issue of greater value to those interested in the subject matter covered, it may not appeal to others. Hence we have decided to alternate Special Editions with issues that include material covering all phases of interest. The Special Edition issues will likewise carry only about 75 percent copy of subject matter indicated and the balance of general interest material. The coming issue therefore will be of general coverage while the following issue will cover in some depth "TROPICAL RADIO TELEGRAPH CO" and the great White Fleet. We hope you like this "product mix". Comments are always invited on such matters as your input gives us good guidance.

### Happy Holidays to All

Those of us here at HQ plus Officers and Directors of the Society would like to express our gratitude to the hundreds of loyal members who have, each in his or her own way, helped to build the Society during the past year. We wish one and all a ... "VERY HAPPY YULE SEASON AND MAY 1982 BE REWARDING TO YOU ALL". A special thanks to those who have remembered us with their Christmas Cards and greetings.



William A. Breniman  
... for our Staff.





## EDITORS NOTE

LOUISA B. SANDO authored a booklet in 1958 which she titled - CQ YL (The Story of Women in Amateur Radio). The book was a wonderful record of what women have done and achieved in the field of radio-telegraphy. It is mostly about Amateur participation but she also had chapters on the "Pioneer Wireless Women" which she has authorized us to reprint. It might be noted that Louisa worked for QST as Assistant to the Editor during the war years and later worked on other publications including "CQ" in 1947 where she was Assistant Editor for several years. Since the book was published in 1958, make allowances for text references. We know our members will enjoy the historical notes on our distaff members and we wish to thank her for permission to reprint the accompanying article.

## YL MARINE OPERATORS

(Continued from Page 1)

## Miss Graynella Parker

sieged her and Graynella was a bit incautious in endorsing radio as a profession for women offering travel, good pay with light work, romance. The old marine ops didn't like this. Women had already taken over many of their jobs when the telegraph operators had been out on strike. The men had taken to the sea—and now girls were going after even these jobs. The men who had been so willing to assist her in the beginning became indifferent. Others when transmitting to her "burned up the key" at speeds she couldn't copy, and profanity over the air became thicker than ever. Graynella left the sea in April 1911.

## FIRST ON THE PACIFIC

Out on the Pacific coast the first woman to go to sea as ship's operator was a Miss Tucker who in 1911 sailed out of Seattle on the S.S. *Indianapolis*. Also in 1911 Miss Edith Coombs was in charge of the S.S. *Roanoke's* radio on the Pacific. At this time Congress was drafting legislation to force all U.S. passenger ships to carry radio equipment. The question arose whether a woman operator should stick to her key, while a vessel sank, or hold out for the old rule of the sea—women and children first. Edith said to just give her a chance, she would stick to the ship, but she had no occasion to prove it while she served.



Mabelle Kelso wearing headphones outside the radio room aboard the S. S. *Mariposa*, on which she was radio operator during the summer of 1912.

## MAYBELLE KELSO

In June 1912 Miss Mabelle Kelso shipped as radio operator aboard the S.S. *Mariposa*, an excursion boat plying between Seattle and Alaska. Mabelle had studied Morse at the Pittsburgh Technical College in 1908 and after graduation had worked in a Western Union branch office for six months and later for Postal Telegraph.

On the Pacific Coast she found United Wireless had decided to accept two girls to study wireless. They had many applications but no others had Morse experience so they put Mabelle in the class with the men. There she learned the Continental code and studied the apparatus sufficiently to be able to make minor repairs at sea. On graduation Mabelle went to the Bremerton Navy Yard, where a lieutenant of the U.S. Navy gave her the usual examination. At that time no formal licenses were issued, only a Certificate of Skill in Radiocommunication. Mabelle was told at the time that her certificate (dated June 6, 1912) was the first license ever issued by any Government to any woman to operate wireless.

Mabelle served on the *Mariposa* until Sept. 1912 when Marconi bought United Wireless and refused to allow women to operate aboard ship. Marconi took her into their land office in Seattle where she handled all messages from all their ships, transmitted from the station in the University District to the downtown office over a buzzer, kept the books, and did stenographic work. She stayed with them for a year, but they did not pay the salary she could make in other fields.

Mabelle says she enjoyed the wireless work very much and intended to make it her life work, until Marconi ended her dream. Shortly after she left the *Mariposa*, the Titanic disaster occurred in the Atlantic. As a result of the investigation which followed, all radio operators' certificates were cancelled and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade licenses issued.

She at that time was in the Marconi land office and rather than be left without a license, she returned to Bremerton Navy Yard, took another examination and in Feb. 1913 obtained a First Grade License, one of the very first women to hold such a license. (This was issued by the Department of Commerce and Labor.) In 1917 Mabelle married Lt. James Shaw and since 1924 she has worked as a doctor of chiropractic.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Department of Commerce and Labor  
BUREAU OF MARINE RADIO

OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF SKILL IN RADIO COMMUNICATION

Be it in testimony that, under the provisions of the Act of June 24, 1910, the following named person has been examined and found to be qualified to operate a radio communication system:

(1) This certificate is issued to the person named in the following certificate of skill in radio communication.

(2) This certificate is issued to the person named in the following certificate of skill in radio communication.

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Copy of operator's Certificate of Skill in Radiocommunication issued to Mabelle Kelso June 6, 1912. Mabelle was told that this was the first license ever issued by any government to any woman to operate wireless.

## MRS. H. E. SOULE

In 1912 Mrs. H. E. Soule, wife of the master of the S.S. *Windber*, acted as radio operator on that ship after attending radio school for three months and securing her license. The *Windber* was in the Alaska canning trade and carried passengers, so radio equipment was required.

## GREAT LAKES

Several girls have seen service on the Great Lakes. In 1913 Miss Margaret King spent some time on the S.S. *Eastland* (this steamer two years later overturned with a loss of 815 lives). A Miss Mason was on a Lake Michigan ship in 1918 and in 1919 a Miss Welch was operator on the passenger vessel *Seagandbee*.

In 1929 Helen Hargreaves (now Mrs. Cloutier) was attending radio school in Frankfort, Michigan, across the Lake from Manistique, her home town. The chief of the radio school also was chief radio operator at the main land station for the Ann Arbor Car-ferrys and all students going to his school got first-hand experience. Most of the radio operators aboard the fleet of ships were students and graduates of this school. On weekends, when Helen went home—a seven-hour run across the lake—she helped the fellows with their work, reports and ship-to-shore traffic. This was the era of "blue bottles" that lit the entire room when one closed the key. Helen did not make radio her lifetime profession, but she went on the air as an amateur at the same time and has been on the air ever since 1929, her present station call being W8GJX.

The only other girl to have been assigned as radio operator on Great Lakes vessels was an Alice Joyce who served in 1942.



Helen Hargreaves, fresh out of radio school in 1929. She obtained first-hand experience operating aboard ferries crossing Lake Michigan during 7-hour run between this radio school and her home. Now Helen Cloutier, she is W8GJX.

## THE PIONEER WIRELESS WOMEN

## EAST COAST

Back on the East Coast there was a Mrs. Frank Chambers who went to sea in the early days from the Port of Philadelphia aboard the old Merchant & Miners Line ships. W2ZI adds that her OM Frank made some of the prettiest spark gear of that time down on 7th St. in Philly—this was about 1910.

In 1917 a Miss Du Val obtained a commercial license and her ambition was to work in a Navy Coast station. Unable to get this position she was given a trial on the S.S. *Howard*. War came, however, the Government started taking over the ships and commercial operators were replaced by Navy men, forcing Miss DuVal to leave the sea.

In 1929 on the Atlantic Coast Mrs. Elizabeth White served for three months on the S.S. *Trimountain*, of which her husband was master.

## LENA MICHELSON

## First Girl to Send SOS

One girl, at least, stayed with her ship as radio operator during World War I. Miss Lena Michelson shipped out of New Orleans in March 1918 on the tanker *Tamesi*, which her father commanded. Seven months later, on Sept. 16, 1918 the *Tamesi* went aground on a bar off Texas in a heavy fog. As it was being ground to bits on the rocks Lena's dad gave her the order to send an SOS—so Lena Michelson became the first woman to send out the sea's call for help. Her SOS was picked up by station NBK at Galveston, but by dumping their oil in the Gulf, the *Tamesi* washed free and made shore under her own power.

Lena stayed on her dad's ship throughout the war and later transferred with him to another tanker, the *Eugene V. R. Thayer*, where she worked for five years. This gave her a total of eight years as a seagoing radio operator! Well liked by the marine ops, Lena was a skilled operator and knew all the facets of her trade. When she came ashore in 1926 she became assignment clerk with the Radiomarine Corp.

## World War II Sparkettes

The feminine radio ops who found such an enthusiastic welcome among the operators on warships at Eniwetok were three of fourteen WACs who sailed as marine radio operators on Army hospital ships during World War II.

Toward the end of 1944 the U.S. Army picked a group of WAC radio operators to be trained for duty aboard Army hospital ships.



At the close of World War II, with a shortage of men, Sgts. Given, Loree and Hand received discharges from the WAC and then signed aboard their same ship, the *Chateau Thierry*, as lieutenants in the Army Transport Service. Here Lt. Alice Loree (left) and Lt. Esther Given (W68DE) wear their new uniforms in their Civil Service status.

Since the women's services were on non-combat status, WACs were ideally suited to serve aboard hospital ships because there were other women aboard (Army nurses), the ships travelled under the Geneva Treaty as neutral vessels and were therefore unarmed and fully lighted at night.

In order to qualify for this assignment a WAC had to attend a special Army school in Brooklyn, N.Y. where she unlearned all of the procedures in which she had been trained as an Army operator, and learned regular peacetime commercial procedures. She also had to attain a code speed of 35 words per minute and be able to send and receive blinker signals at 12 WPM. In addition she was trained in servicing batteries, the use of lifeboat emergency equipment and other duties peculiar to ships at sea.

Radio operators on Army ships during the war were all enlisted personnel, most of them held ratings of Technician Fourth Grade or better. The fourteen WACs who sailed as marine radio operators on Army hospital ships were: Lucy Alter, Elaine Corrum, Kathryn Barnes, Lillian Browning, Del Kumnick, Terry Mezzanotti, Paula Sanborn, Bernadine Kurtz, Esther Given, Alice Loree, Lorraine Hand, Regina Rice, Rose Landrey and Virginia Kidd.

The first group of three girls sailed in Dec. 1944 from Charleston, S.C., aboard the U.S. Army Hospital Ship *Louise A. Milne*. Other ships on which the girls served were the U.S.A.H.S. *Ernestine Koranda*, *Jarrett M. Huddleston*, and the *Larkspur*.

Sergeants Given, Loree and Hand were assigned aboard the U.S.A.H.S. *Chateau Thierry*, a converted transport which was equipped to handle between 480 and 500 patients in addition to some 400 crew and medical complement. The ship sailed from Charleston to Bristol (Avonmouth), England, early in 1945. Esther Given has related some of their experiences.

For this first trip, two of the former ships operators remained aboard to act in advisory capacity to the "sparkettes." The chief operator's first official statement to the girls was that a "spark" stood his/her four-hour watch regardless of mal-de-mer and that he and the other operator were just going along for the ride on this trip. The girls were expected to take over fully; however, the men would be there in case of dire emergency. (It was later discovered that the two men had worked out a schedule between them so that they would be able to stand 24-hour watch when the experiment of having women as radio operators failed!) Much to the credit of the gals, they proved to be equally as capable as the men operators in their assignments.

No indoctrination could be more wicked than that of landing on a new job assignment in entirely foreign surroundings as G.I. guinea pigs (with two strikes against them for being girls), plus the added feature of the elements brewing up a juicy North Atlantic storm for the event. The first two days were pure misery for the girls, two of whom were prairie-raised and had never before been aboard a ship. Each 4-hour watch was an eon of sitting with "cans" on the ears copying press at 30 WPM for the skipper's morning news, with a bucket clamped tightly betwixt the knees. By the second day it was obvious that something had to give, and it was not about to be the girl guinea pigs, so it would have to be the bucket. Thus ended the mal-de-mer session.

Among duties of a radio operator aboard ship is the care of batteries and emergency distress equipment in the lifeboats. Probably the most tedious job for the gals on hospital ships was this particular duty. On the *Chateau Thierry* two lifeboats containing such equipment were slung some 30 feet above the deck and had to be serviced each week. A long extension ladder was placed against a boom which ran parallel to the swinging lifeboat. The operator climbed to the top of the ladder, straddled the boom and waited till a list of the ship swung the lifeboat near enough to jump in. All the time the op was holding a can of distilled water and a hydrometer. The only change in the descent was that the hydrometer and water can could be lowered to the deck by means of a rope, but the problem of getting back on the ladder was greater than that of getting into the boat in the first place. It was no help when a full audience of ambulatory patients was on the deck below giving advice and yelling "Whoops!" and "Look out!" at tense moments.

(Continued on Page 5)



U.S.A.H.S. *Chateau Thierry*, one of four U.S. Army hospital ships on which WAC radio operators served during World War II.



# THE PIONEER WIRELESS WOMEN

(Continued from Page 4)

On one trip from England en route to Charleston, with all the lights ablaze, as required by the Geneva Treaty on a neutral ship, a voice came booming out of the depths of night, "Turn off your lights and stand by or we'll blow you out of the water!" The hospital ship had sailed straight into the center of a Canadian convey and was silhouetting each of their ships to any enemy who might be scouting about. Needless to say the lights were turned out and the ship stood by. Next morning when light came the hospital ship stood alone in the middle of the Atlantic with no sign of the hundreds of ships she had unknowingly jeopardized the night before.

During the War radar was considered a "weapon" so hospital ships could not be "armed" with such navigational aids. As soon as the War ended, however, all these ships were immediately fitted with radar equipment.

At the close of World War II Army operators were replaced by civilians on Army ships as quickly as possible. When the *Chateau Thierry* came into port in San Francisco in Dec. 1945 the WAC operators were informed they were to be replaced. At this time each of the girls had sufficient points for discharge from the Army and the San Francisco port of embarkation was having a hard time finding enough civilian operators to fill these vacated posts. After several contacts between the Signal Corps, Water Division and the powers in Washington, it was arranged that the three girls could sail as civilian operators if they sailed together on the same ship and were the full radio complement aboard. Next day the WACs went to Camp Beale, Calif., received their honorable discharges from the WAC as sergeants, came back to San Francisco and signed aboard their same ship as lieutenants in the Army Transport Service as civilian operators on Civil Service status.

No uniform had been designed for women in this capacity. A quick trip was made to purchase Navy nurse uniforms, Army Transport insignia and white shirts. Being Army veterans with ribbons from many theatres of occupation, these gals made quite an impressive sight. Once in Honolulu a shore patrolman had to be shown Army discharge papers, ship's papers, Coast Guard identification, et al, before he was convinced they were not impersonating officers of the U.S. forces!



One of fourteen WACs who served on U.S. Army hospital ships during World War II, Sgt. Alice Loree is shown in blinker contact in Avonmouth River area, British Isles.

Most of the fourteen girls have married and contacts have been lost, but none of them will ever quite lose the feeling of challenge and service that was theirs as liaison between a mercy ship and the rest of the world. One at least, Esther Given, so enjoyed the radio work that she obtained her amateur license and since 1946 has been on the air as W6BDE.

Another YL, Gladys Goff, W9EKS, served aboard two ships on the East Coast. She was lined up to go aboard her third ship when a strike delayed the sailing. Then she chose a coastal station, WPG in Norfolk (no longer in existence), in order to get more experience. W5MET ex-MM, who worked her, credits Gladys with swinging a "mean bug" on 500 kc.

## Billie L. Adels



Billie L. Adels, W4CJV, ex-W6HBO, veteran YL maritime radio operator, in eight years at sea served aboard two Norwegian vessels and several flying the U.S. flag.



QSL card used by Billie Adels, W6HBO/MM, while aboard the S.S. Gulf Banker.

## 8-Years Logged

Although Lena Michelsen holds the record for women marine operators on U.S. ships with her eight years at sea, Miss Billie L. Adels is a close runner up.

It all started for Billie by accident during World War II. At this time she was taking a pre-medical course at the University of New Mexico, but her eyesight would not permit her to continue her intensive studies. Returning to her home in San Francisco, Hawaiian-born Billie (she also has spent several years in Australia) decided to work in a war industry. While waiting at an employment office she noticed an opening for a stewardess on a Norwegian ship, and got the position.

At this time on Norwegian ships girls were beginning to take over the work of radio operators, so the skipper talked to Billie about it. Back at the Pacific Radio School for three months Billie obtained her license and in Dec. 1945 sailed as radio operator on the Norwegian ship *M/S General Ruge*. In 1946 she operated aboard another Norwegian ship, the *M/S Høyanger*.

Billie's first American ship was the S.S. *Edward J. Berwin*, and at this time she was the only American woman to serve as a regular seaman on a U.S.-flag freighter.

In 1948 Billie sailed on the *Liberty* ship *S.S. John Gibbon*. The ship left Philadelphia the day after New Year's and, as Billie tells it, hit a whiz bang of a storm, which washed two men overboard. Both men were rescued, one being washed back on the ship and the other was finally pulled back after they found they could not launch the one lifeboat left (the other was washed by a good-sized wave), this one being frozen in the blocks and immovable. Then the cargo shifted, an all-coal cargo for Antwerp. They got into Falmouth, England, with a 14-degree list.

Billie describes the *John Gibbon* as having no "belly band" and on the way back it developed more and more cracks. In the Bay of Biscay they hit a 75-mph gale, the telemotor went out, and the ship rolled helplessly. By 11 p.m. Billie was called to stand watch. Soup up the main transmitter as high as it would go, Billie waited with bated breath for instructions to send an SOS. Lifeboats would have been useless. Luck was with them; the steering gear was fixed and they battled their way through the storm.

## First in Hong Kong

On Sept. 7, 1948, Billie hit the front page of Hong Kong's *China Mail* with the headlines "Pretty Blonde Does Work of Two Men." As radio operator and purser of the 2,127-ton freighter *Union Carrier*, Billie was the first American girl to visit the colony in her capacity. This ship, formerly the *Hickory Ghyll*, was one of seven Victories which the U.S. had transferred to the Chinese National government. American crews sailed all the ships to Chinese ports.

Billie had some novel experiences on this ship. On the first pay day the 22 men in the motley crew crowded her office, peeping over each other's shoulders to have a look at their new purser. Billie shooed the men down the ladder. Then she told them to come up one by one into her office and not to be disorderly. The men queued up and everything went smoothly.

At Bombay, India, where the *Union Carrier* had to deliver cargo, Billie met the son of a wealthy Indian chemical manufacturer. He promptly fell in love with Billie and pleaded with her to marry him. Despite the lavish surroundings, which she admits were intriguing, she turned him down.



The S.S. Gulf Banker was home to Billie Adels for 4½ years on voyages through the Caribbean.

W6HBO/MM

Billie's last ship was the tanker S.S. *Gulf Banker*. Billie says it was a good one and she spent four and a half years aboard, plying the blue Caribbean with nothing to worry about but eating, sleeping, and standing a watch.

Billie received permission from the owners, the Gulf and South American S.S. Co., to install her own amateur station on the *Gulf Banker*. She had a 25-watt mobile rig with a home-built power supply and a fine three-element rotary beam up on the deck. Everyone aboard ship had a part in building the antenna.

She had to turn it by hand, but found it would beam right through the smokestack. An NC-57 receiver completed her station, which she operated under the call W6HBO/MM. Her bulkhead was plastered with QSL cards and hers were much in demand, for Billie apparently is the only American YL ever to have operated maritime mobile!

In the fall of '53 Billie decided to quit the sea when she found her eyes were back to normal. She has always loved animals—she even took a Siamese cat and her three kittens around the world with her on the *Union Carrier*, and sold two of the kittens in Hong Kong. Now Billie is in her second year at the Veterinary School at Alabama Polytechnic Institute and declares she doesn't miss the sea too much—except perhaps at quiz time. Her call now is W4CJV, and she is trustee of the local club station, W4UJJ.



These Norwegian girls were pupils in the radio class graduating in June 1954 from the Bergen Sjømannsskole (Bergen Nautical School). The one at the right was only 17. Their instructor comments all of them are sweet girls.



## YLs on Scandinavian Ships

Currently there appear to be no girls operating on any ships flying the U.S. flag. However, according to the Radiomarine Corporation of America there are some sixty Scandinavian (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish) ships that carry women radio operators and it is believed that there are a number of Russian vessels which also carry women operators.

Due to the manpower shortage in Norway it has long been the practice to train girls as combination radio operators and pursers. W4EWS/MM tells us that these girls do all the paper work and stand a somewhat haphazard radio watch which usually consists of opening up two or three times a day with a "QRU?" The paper work load is so heavy that many of them do not even get ashore in some ports. Dick adds that without exception the Norwegian girl operators are generally good looking and have an excellent command of English. Often they wind up married to one of the mates aboard ship and thenceforth sail as a married couple on the same ship. For "safety reasons" and because of the additional secretarial work, amateur radio stations are not permitted to be used by operators on Norwegian merchant ships.

In Norway maritime operators are trained in seven schools of navigation run by the government. Rolf Suleng, chief technical instructor at the Bergen Sjømannsskole reports that every year about 150 candidates from these schools pass their exams for 2nd class radiotelegraph licenses and that some 25% of the pupils are girls.

One Norwegian (OM) maritime operator says that in his personal opinion the girls are just as good as the men with the key, but when it comes to repairing some broken down equipment "most of them lose their heads." He adds this opinion is common among Norwegian men operators, and that the girls often can't even change a fuse or a tube, and in an emergency there have been cases where some mistakes have been made.

This operator recounts a story he heard from a chief engineer who was telling about one time he was on a ship when a fire broke out and they had to abandon the ship. "I was number two to be in the lifeboat," said the engineer, "and do you know who was first?—it was Olge, the woman operator!" In her praise it must be added that after they tried the lifeboat transmitter and it didn't work (supposedly her fault as it was powered by batteries and after four months aboard she had not once looked after them, and didn't even know they were there), she went back on board the ship and stayed at the transmitter as long as possible, calling SOS. A few hours later the crew was all picked up by another vessel.

In W4HLE's "DX-YL Column" in YL Harmonics for May-June, 1957, Arlie gives this



LA7YL, Ellen Bendiksen, spent 2½ years operating aboard Norwegian ships.

account from LA7YL, Ellen Bendiksen of Norway. Ellen wrote, in part: "After getting my second class certificate as a wireless operator I attended school in Oslo for nine months. Afterwards I took my 1st class certificate and passed a radar course. I waited for five months before getting my first job."

"A few days after my 20th birthday I signed on a tanker. The Master had asked for an experienced boy operator. He was not too happy when he got an unexperienced YL instead, but he was nice to me and pleased with my work. I stayed on board for 16 months. When I left the Master asked me to come back. I did go back later, but first I went on one of the company's cargo liners for 4 months then returned to the tanker. I was on board for 12 months then married the chief officer Sept. 1951. It wasn't much being married to a sailor so my husband, and his brother also a sailor, came off the ship and now manage a small business. We have three children. I have been in all parts of the world, including the USA."



## Canadian YL Marine Operators

Besides their own Norwegian girls there have been many Canadian women working as radio operators on Norwegian ships. One girl, from Eastern Canada, made so many crossings of the Atlantic during World War II that she was decorated by the King of Norway and a book written of her experiences, "The Lucky Mossdale," was a best seller in Norway.

Miss Lylie Smith, also a Canadian girl, has been a radio operator on Norwegian ships for ten years, having started early in 1946. (Prior to this she was the first girl radio operator to be hired by the Hudson's Bay Fur Trade Co. for their northern posts.) Since being at sea she has spent five years in the far east run—Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Dutch Indies and two trips to Shanghai just after the War. For almost the last five years she's been in a run between the United States West Coast and Europe—France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, England and Norway, with one round-the-world trip from England through the Mediterranean to Australia, to Los Angeles and back to Europe. Currently Lylie is aboard *M/S Siranger* on a run from Los Angeles which goes around South America and back to the West Coast.

## Regulations Do Not Prohibit YL Operators

Though there are at present no girls serving as maritime radio operators aboard U.S.-flag ships, Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission, Mary Jane Morris, reports there is no law or regulation of the FCC which would prohibit women from serving as radiotelegraph operators on board ships.

Such operators now also are licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard as radio officers. The Chief of the Merchant Vessel Personnel Division, Office of the Commandant U.S. Coast Guard Hq. in Washington, D.C., reports: "The Coast Guard regulations for licensing and certifying of merchant marine personnel does not contain any restrictions prohibiting women from serving as Radiotelegraph Operators on vessels of the United States."

In addition to those mentioned in the preceding account, we express our appreciation to the following persons who assisted in providing information for this record of girl marine operators—W7HDS, W6PCN, W3OB, W5CA, K4AJG, W2PFB, W6LYG; Dr. L. S. H. baird, ex-9HO; Y. Kaldal; Fred Howe, ROU; Wm. Simon, VWOA.

So if any of you YLs are interested, there's nothing in the rules and regulations to stop you—but you'd better be good at radio, and have a little spark of the pioneer in you, to compete in a field that to date has been almost exclusively masculine.

(Reprinted from CQ for June, 1956)



Thanks to...

Louisa B. Sando



Reprint from

**SOS TO THE RESCUE**

Published 1935

By **Cmdr. Karl H.W. Baarslag**

X

**GIRL MARINE RADIO OPERATORS**

WHILE it is true that there have been a number of girl operators on American ships, still if all those who followed the sea less than six months were ruled out, there would be only one girl eligible for the title of "lady brass-pounder." There have been, of course, a number of girl amateurs, but we are concerned only with those who went to sea as professional operators.

The world's first woman commercial wireless operator was Miss Anna Nevins who left the Western Union in 1906 to take over a regular watch at old "NY" atop of 42 Broadway, New York. The cumbersome key used in those days to break the crashing open gap spark held no terrors for her and she soon became a competent "brass-pounder," clearing "NY's" traffic to ships at sea with all the skill and speed of a veteran. She later worked a regular trick at old "WA," the radio station on the roof of the Waldorf-Astoria. In July, 1910, she married Mr. H. J. Hughes, the manager of "NY," and left the wireless key for good.

To Miss Graynella Packer, a girl from Florida, goes the distinction of having been America's first woman marine operator. She had some Western Union experience and came to New York in 1910 and applied to the United Wireless Company for a berth. The officials were at first sceptical as to the possibility of placing her; it was unprecedented, and seamen are noted for their conservatism and coolness to innovations. A coastwise line engaged in passenger service, however, considered that a "wireless-woman" might be a publicity possibility. Jack Binns' and his famous "CQD" was still fresh in the public mind and a girl at the key might prove of great advertising value. There being as yet no government license or other formalities, Miss Packer had merely to undergo a short course of training under the chief operator at "NY" and she was then ready to assume charge of a ship's radio installation. Mr. H. J. Hughes, the superintendent of the company, assigned her to the SS. *Mohawk* on November 29, 1910, and Miss Graynella Packer, the world's first woman operator, was off to Charleston and Jacksonville. Her presence on the ship aroused a great deal of interest among the passengers and crew.

She made a number of trips and it is generally agreed that the men operators on other ships were more than liberal with assistance in relaying traffic and helping her in every way to "get on to the ropes." Unfortunately, however, she was besieged by an endless horde of newspaper reporters and writers, among them several of her own sex, and in one interview she was so incautious as wholeheartedly to endorse radio operating as an ideal profession for girls, listing among its numerous advantages, free travel, good pay, light work, healthful atmosphere, and unlimited opportunity for making acquaintances. Feminist writers were quick to seize on the dramatic possibilities of some cool member of their sex emulating Jack Binns and becoming a "wireless heroine." The publicity did not help Miss Packer. A noticeable coolness on the part of the radiomen began to set in. Many of them were old, landline telegraphers who had been driven from their keys by feminine competition; they had not forgotten the great telegraph strike of a few years before when women had stepped into their places. Young girls operating the new automatic multiplex machines, or "Krumms," had also caused a number of the old wiremen to lose their jobs. They had fled to the sea, and now girls were to be marine operators! Their chivalrous cooperation ceased and turned into cool indifference. Others, when communicating with her, "burned her up" by transmitting at speeds she could not copy. The self-imposed restrictions on profanity over the air out of deference to her were relaxed and the air resumed its masculine freedom. Miss Packer left the sea four months later in April 1911, to take up the study of music.

The first woman on the Pacific Coast to take out a ship as operator appears to have been a Miss Tucker, who as far back as 1911 was sailing out of Seattle on the SS. *Indianapolis*. The next woman operator on that coast was Miss Edith Coombs, who was in charge of the SS. *Roanoke's* radio. This was also in 1911 when Congress was drafting America's first radio legislation compelling all passenger ships to be radio-equipped. The question was raised whether the lives of passengers and crew of a sinking ship might safely be entrusted to a woman's handling of radio distress calls. Under the terrifying conditions of shipwreck and disaster, could a woman be expected to stay at the key? As there was nothing in the law specifically barring them by sex, the question was never answered and seems to have been one merely of academic interest.

Seamen and officers also brought up some opposition to girl operators on the grounds of gallantry—could they properly leave a sinking ship and leave a woman at the wireless key, violating the first law of the sea? Miss Coombs disposed of both objections in an interview in which she stated that the travelling public had nothing to fear as she would stay at her post "until the last flickering spark of electricity could be sent from the vessel." She insisted that, as a member of the crew, "Ladies first" was inapplicable to her and that she would, if necessary, remain with the captain until the last human being had left. She quit the sea shortly afterwards without having had her brave words put to the test.

In 1912, the records show a Miss Mabel Kelso sailing out of San Francisco as radio operator on the SS. *Mariposa*. The government began to license radio operators the same year, so that in 1913, there were no less than thirty women on the West Coast possessing the new radio licences. Information is extremely scanty as to whether many of these women operators ever went to sea and, if so, how long they stayed.

The year 1912 also saw a Mrs. H. E. Soule, wife of the master of the SS. *Windber*, acting as radio operator on that ship. The *Windber* had made a rough passage from the East Coast to California without radio equipment and as she was to enter the hazardous Alaska canning trade and also to carry passengers, the installation of equipment was compulsory. While the ship underwent repairs, Captain Soule sent his wife to a radio school and after three months of study she was successful in passing her examination and securing a license. There is no information as to how long Mrs. Soule acted as a radio operator on her husband's ship.

The Great Lakes have also seen a few girl operators. Miss Margaret King spent a season on the SS. *Eastland*, that ill-fated steamer which later overturned at its pier in Chicago, in 1915, with a loss of 815 lives. Miss King appears to have been on the *Eastland* only briefly, in 1913. A Miss Mason was at the wireless key of a Lake Michigan vessel in 1918, and the following year, a Miss Welch completed a season on a large passenger vessel, the *Seandbee*. These three girls seem to complete the roll for the inland seas.

The next woman operator on the East Coast after Miss Packer appears to have been Miss DuVal in 1917. She succeeded in obtaining a commercial licence, but was unable to realize her patriotic ambition of entering a Navy coast station despite some correspondence with Secretary of the Navy Daniels. There had been rumours that the Navy would enlist women operators for shore duty, in order to release men for sea service. Disappointed in this hope, she turned to the commercial field and like her predecessor, Miss Packer, found a welcome, although it was a half-hearted one with qualifications—they would give her a trial. She was assigned to the Merchant & Miners SS. *Howard*. The chief operator was one of the old school and he was not a little surprised when his new junior turned out to be a girl. Radiomen had long forgotten Miss Packer of some eight years before. He soon recovered from his surprise and told Miss DuVal that the junior's watch began at 1:30 in the morning, and that he would expect her on time. She would also polish the brass and keep the place tidy as part of her junior's duties; in brief, he would expect her to perform the same work as if she were a man. Miss DuVal professed to be highly elated at her reception on a basis of masculine equality and she proudly related the fact to the customary newspaper reporters who trooped down to interview her on the ship's arrival at Savannah. Unfor-

tunately for Miss DuVal, the government began taking over all ships and replacing the commercial operators with regular Navy men about this time and she had, perforce, to leave the sea.

About ten years ago a lonesome American operator boarded another American ship in a small Central American port. There was little of interest in the place; so he thought he would go aboard the other American vessel and have a chat with a fellow "brass-pounder." As he came up the ladder he saw a "Chinaman" repairing an antenna lead-in. He had heard of Chinese crews on one of our so-called "American steamship" lines but he had never heard of Chinese operators on American vessels. Here was a new one. So he went on board to have a talk with John Chinaman whose pigtail was unmistakably flying in the breeze. Nearer approach revealed not a son of old Cathay but an attractive young girl in overalls, a pair of pliers in her hand, and every indication that she knew what she was doing. Yes, she was the operator and she was glad to meet a fellow "brass-pounder." So it now became known in radio circles that another "Miss Packer" had slipped into the ranks of the radiomen, quite unannounced, some years before. Miss Lena Michelson, whose father commanded a tanker, had joined her first assignment at New Orleans in March 1918, when she sailed with her father on the tanker *Tamesi*. Her health had been delicate, and it was thought that a few years at sea might prove beneficial to her.

Miss Michelson had been radio operator on the *Tamesi* about seven months when the tanker grounded on a bar off the coast of Texas during a heavy fog on September 16, 1918. Deep loaded with 43,000 barrels of Mexican crude oil, the *Tamesi* went aground with a terrifying lurch and was soon grinding her bottom off on the bar. Pumps were immediately started to unload some of the tanker's cargo in the hope that lightening her might float the ship free. As the situation assumed serious proportions after several hours the captain prudently ordered the SOS sent out; so Miss Lena Michelson became the first and only member of her sex ever to broadcast the sea's call for help—SOS. NBK at Galveston answered immediately.

Shortly afterwards conditions assumed serious proportions and it was thought all might have to abandon ship. However, after a considerable amount of oil had been pumped over, the *Tamesi* floated clear and she was able to proceed to her destination, Aransas Pass, Texas, without assistance.

Miss Michelson saw out the war, under her father, and three years later transferred with him to another tanker, the *Eugene V. R. Thayer*, where she remained for five years. She not only became a very proficient operator but was also exceedingly well liked by her male colleagues of the wireless key. With more than eight years of sea experience credited to her license, she became famous as America's only woman operator. She had probably totalled more time as a seagoing radio operator than all the other girls added together. Her long service and first-hand knowledge of radio operators' work, problems and view points qualified her for a position ashore with the Radiomarine Corporation where she became assignment clerk.

Thus it came about that the paradoxical situation arose that a woman exercised considerable authority over a profession whose working ranks were as free from members of her sex as the Army, Navy, railroads or lumber camps. However, it was generally agreed that she discharged her duties with impartiality and in a capable manner and she was held in high regard by all radiomen who knew her. She and Mrs. H. J. Hughes are the only two women operators enrolled in the Veteran Wireless Operators' Association of America.

The only other woman operator that the writer has found any record of on the Atlantic Coast was a Mrs. Elizabeth White of the SS. *Trimountain* in 1929. She apparently made only a three months' trip, accompanying her husband, who was master of the vessel.

While Poseidon, during radio's brief history, has claimed over thirty radiomen as victims of his wrath, he has been most benign toward those women operators who invaded his domain, the sea. Not only have no women operators perished with their ships, but careful research does not reveal any record of a girl operator ever figuring in a sea disaster or sending out an SOS other than Miss Michelson on the *Tamesi* in 1918.







Olive J. Roeckner at Operating Position on M/S SIRANGER/LLMK Circa 1947. Now lives in Kalso, B.C. Call VE7ERA — SOWP — 2891-V



M/S. SIRANGER — LLMK San Pedro, Calif. Photo by Olive J. Roeckner



M/S. SIRANGER/LLMK Passing below LIONS GATE BRIDGE Vancouver, B. C.

## Seven Years A Wireless Girl

By

Olive J. Roeckner/VE7ERA

SOWP 2891-V

### My Introduction to Radio

I first became interested in radio as a high school student in Vancouver during the war. In my last year at school I was a member of the girl cadets where we learned drill, and as a side line, morse on the lamp. Code interested me. Since I wanted to join the forces upon graduation I decided to get a job which would enable me to study radio at night school then I would join the navy with qualifications and get a commission. Ambitious but not too realistic!

I put my plan into effect but learned that to obtain a 2nd class ticket at night school would take at least 2 years. However my progress was satisfactory and the principal recommended me for a government subsidy plan. It meant that I would be paid to attend radio school on a full time basis and upon graduation would work for the Department of Transport. So much for my navy commission. I began my studies in earnest, wrote the exams in April '44, obtained my 2nd class certificate and was posted to VAI, Pt. Grey Wireless Station as an interceptor operator. One of the YLs from the school was Elizabeth King, now Anderson, SOWP member #2490V. It was she who introduced me to the Society.

I must at this point mention that a few Canadian girls were able to put themselves through radio school and being free agents upon graduation were able to join ships in the Norwegian Merchant Navy. I know of two YLs who were on the Atlantic run, one on a tanker, and at least 3 sailed the Pacific. When we shore-bound operators received letters from the girls at sea our envy ran high. I am very proud that Canadian girls served at sea during the war years, and after. They were truly pioneers.

Our work at VAI, as interceptor operators, was classified. It was satisfying, if not exciting, to know that our duties were important to the war effort.

After VE day we heard that the YLs at the station were no longer under contract and would be released in the near future. Along with a friend I tried to get a ship through New York but without success. We left VAI in Oct. '45 and were accepted as interceptor operators with the Department of National Defense at their special wireless station near Victoria, to replace service personnel being discharged.

### San Francisco Here I Come !

At the end of January '47 I took a holiday and on my return learned that one of my apartment mates, Elizabeth, had obtained a ship and was already west bound from San Francisco. I fired off a letter to the Scandinavian Shipping authorities and to my delight, in March, received word to get my seaman's papers ready. A wire arrived one Friday evening in April to be in San Francisco the following Monday. I obtained my release from the DND by a very understanding commanding officer, rushed around to airlines and immigration and flew off on the Monday morning. Please remember that this was 1947. Flying was a big event in those days, and up to that time I had never been farther than 500 miles from home. All I could think of was that my dreams had come true — I was going to sea! Such realities as not knowing a word of Norwegian didn't occur to me... or the fact that I, who suffered from motion sickness, was going to make my home on the rolling sea... but when you are young you don't stop to consider these things.

In San Francisco I contacted the shipping authorities and was directed to Pier 41... and so I was introduced to the ship that was to be my home for the next 4 years. The M/S "Siranger", owned by the Westfal-Larsen Company of Bergen. I was temporarily assigned to a passenger cabin as the former operator was still on-board and would not be signing off until the ship reached Vancouver, B.C. The captain was ashore but called me to his quarters when he came aboard and introductions were made. I met the other operator, a Miss Esther Crichton from Halifax. She had sailed on the ship during the latter war years and the previous trip had been her first as sole operator.

### I Liked what I saw

Esther took me up to the radio shack next morning and I was very pleased with what I saw. First let me mention that 'Siranger' was a C1A type vessel and had been built at Beaumont, Texas in '43 and launched as the 'Cape River'. She was taken over by Notraship as the 'Narvik' and sailed during the war under that name. After the war she came under the Westfal-Larsen flag as the 'Siranger'... named after their former fine new vessel which had been torpedoed off the coast of Brazil. Some of the present crew, including the captain, had been on the torpedoed ship. For those of you who have sailed on C1As or are familiar with them you know that the operator's roomy cabin is abaft the wheelhouse on the port side and right across the passage from the shack. The equipment was the RCA 4U unit which made for a trim, neat layout. I consider myself very fortunate to have landed in such a good set-up. The ship's callsign, by the way, was LLMK.

Unloading went on for a week in "Frisco" and every night found me propped up on my bunk studying the equipment manual. The captain left for Norway on holiday and the chief officer made temporary captain. Here again my luck was in. Of all captains to begin my sailing career with I had hit the jackpot. Halvor Moy, married to a Norwegian Canadian, now retired and living in Surrey, B.C., was, and is, a fine officer and gentleman. He more or less took me under his wing and treated me like a daughter.

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# Seven Years A Wireless Girl

## My First Ship



Olive J. Roeckner

(Continued from Page 7)

We left Frisco for Portland. Most of the cargo had been discharged and the ship was very light. We sailed under the Golden Gate bridge just at dinnertime and met those Pacific swells and a strong headwind...half an hour later I was in my cabin wondering what had ever possessed me to go to sea! A good thing the other operator was still onboard as I was flat on my back all the way up to the mouth of the Columbia. I did try to make it up to the radio room once or twice but had to beat a hasty retreat. I heard later that there were bets being made onboard that I would sign off when the ship reached Vancouver. I rallied enough to enjoy the trip up the Columbia and even managed to get down a little food. It was a rough start and my sea legs were tottery but I was standing watches by the time we docked at Vancouver.

I do not know of the extra duties of operators on ships of other nationalities but on Norwegian ships the "Sparks", or "Gnisten" as I was called, is expected to do all the purser and secretarial work as well. I later found out that if my watches were 8 hours a day, my other duties took care of the remaining 16!

Initiation began in Vancouver where I had to sign off crew members. That meant that after the paperwork on board I had to take the seamen or officers to immigration and the Norwegian consulate. I had some amusing experiences, especially in San Francisco. If you can picture a young slip of a girl "mother-henning" a half dozen or so not always quite sober seamen through the city you get what I mean.

## VAI de LLMK QTO QRU ?

We left Vancouver and I was finally on my own. I think I can still recall how I felt sending that first QTO QRU to VAI.

Back to Frisco and San Pedro to load...the passengers came aboard then "Siranger" was bound for Chile. My ship was on the Westfal-Larsen West Coast run which circled South America from west to east.

Duties as captain's secretary involved all correspondence, typing of manifests and lists required by immigration and customs in every port. As purser I made up all the wage sheets, posted the money lists, paid the crew and made out the paybooks monthly. All of the mentioned work was done in Norwegian and the only word I had ever heard in that language before was skål! I cannot praise too highly Capt. Moy and the second officer who helped this fledgling Sparks and were so patient and understanding.

I enjoyed my radio work although there wasn't all that much activity. Mostly a flurry of message sending before arriving at port and sometimes during a long voyage contacts with home office in Bergen, copying weather reports and getting the occasional QTE. I particularly enjoyed morsing on the lamp with any passing ship. I tried to copy press as often as possible for the passengers and it was a must to get the press from Oslo every night when at sea. Naturally it was in Norwegian so the 2nd officer would take my copy into the chartroom to correct when on the midnight watch, then I would type it up first thing in the morning.

This first trip lasted six months and at the end of it I felt a seasoned pro. It was fortunate that conditions onboard were fairly harmonious, thanks to the captain. My initiation was uneventful and the experience was to stand me in good stead for the following trips...but I am getting ahead of myself.

"Siranger" could carry up to 12 passengers and we usually had that many when on our regular run. Unfortunately a wartime-built ship lacked luxury and there was little they could do to amuse themselves. Even the best of people can get somewhat snarly on a voyage of six months. Add to that a cook who was a disaster and you have the makings of some interesting situations.

On this first trip southward, crossing the equator, the first timers, like myself, were initiated into King Neptune's Court and presented with certificates hand-painted by our captain. He was a bit of an artist and used to while away many an hour at the easel in his cabin.

Our first stop was Valparaiso and then to San Antonio, a small village a short distance south. One morning while there the captain let me off and I went ashore with three passengers and we took a rattly old bus to Santiago, a two-hour trip. Arrived there to find that a communist-inspired uprising had broken out the night before and the streets were filled with armed militia...and I was in uniform! My appearance caused quite a sensation and snappy salutes were thrown at me left and right. The merchant navy doesn't salute but not to offend, I did my best...remembering longest way up, shortest way down. I bought a newspaper as a

souvenir...it had bold headlines two inches deep..."Communist Rebellion." Actually it was all very quiet while we were in Santiago but after catching the last bus back to San Antonio some shooting did break out again. About a year later a Toronto newspaper picked up an article about me from a Vancouver paper and enlarged and embellished it...accordingly I was supposed to have waded down streets in Santiago piled high with bodies...my introduction to the media!

From San Antonio south through the island waterway of southern Chile. The austere beauty and grandeur of that area will always remain a memorable experience for me. We dropped supplies for the primitive Indians who live down there. Though it was bitterly cold, the Indians were barefoot and wore very little clothing. During later voyages through this region we saw these Indians only one other time.

Through the Straits of Magellan with a stop at Punta Arenas to drop the Chilean pilot then out into the Atlantic and up to the Rio Plata. At that time the port of Buenos Aires was glutted with cargo and ships had to remain anchored at Roads for weeks at a time. We finally came in and docked at Darsena Norte. Very handy indeed as it was just a short walk up to the main part of the city. It was winter during our stay of six weeks, raw and cold. I found B.A. exciting and expensive. We got ashore as often as possible for a good meal of Argentine steak as the food onboard by this time was just awful.



OLIVE J. ROECKNER — 2891-V,  
R/O. M/S SIRANGER/LLMK,  
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

An interesting highlight while at Darsena Norte was the return from Europe of Senora Eva Peron, wife of the president. Planes flew overhead dropping leaflets of welcome and all ships had flags flying and continuously sounded their whistles. I remember one seaman stormed up to the bridge calling the officers Fascists but he didn't know we had been ordered by Argentine authorities to take part in the demonstration.

Just before departure our cook deserted, which was most fortunate because we were ready to do him in. The replacement was no Cordon Bleu chef but a considerable improvement and meals became a pleasure. You will notice throughout this narrative that I have an obsession with food.

Our passengers rejoined us (they always had to go ashore during our long stay in B.A.) and we sailed for Montevideo...a brief stop only, then up the coast of Brazil to Paranaguá, Santos and Rio. I always enjoyed our ports of call in Brazil. The sights, sounds and smells of that country intrigued me...and I fell in love with Rio. I only regret that our stops there were so brief. On a later trip we moved out the very morning that carnival was to begin. From Brazil the run back to the west coast was usually uneventful but one trip we did call at Central American countries...small village ports in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Passage through the Panama Canal was always a high spot.

## Important Detail—My Pay !

I have neglected to mention a rather important detail...my salary. We girls were so keen to get to sea that the matter of wages didn't seem all that important...but it did gripe somewhat, I must admit, when we learned what you Americans were earning. Also, I was told at that time that when your ships docked you were free until you sailed again. Such was not the case on a Norwegian ship. In port I worked my eight hours and often longer every day. I was entitled to one free day a month if in port and if the captain so agreed...otherwise I was paid for it. On later voyages with other captains I worked much overtime without compensation.

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## SEVEN YEARS A WIRELESS GIRL —ROECKNER

(Continued from Page 8)



**My Cabin MS. Siranger**

My salary, gross, was 560 Kroner a month and that included an American bonus which was supposed to compensate for the higher cost of living when sailing in U.S. waters, war risk bonus for those areas where mines, etc., still might be and a bonus toward the upkeep of my uniform. From this princely sum I paid 15% in taxes to Norway so that my net pay was approximately 450 Kroner or roughly \$120 U.S. dollars. A few years later we were at sea when we got word that currencies were devalued. I had a fair amount of money on the books and took quite a loss. It seemed a great tragedy to me as I worked so hard for that money. My net earnings were now closer to \$83 a month. As little as our salaries were I personally felt indebted to the Norwegians for giving me an opportunity that no other country at that time, not even Canada, could give me...and that was to go to sea as a wireless operator.

Regretfully all good things do come to an end and at the conclusion of my first voyage the former captain returned and Capt. **Moy** was given his own ship. Life aboard changed drastically. I shall not mention this captain by name although he has long since passed away. His wife was distantly related to the owners which gave Capt. X an inflated idea of his importance. He was very autocratic and arrogant and drank beyond moderation. Within days of his rejoining "Siranger" 13 crew members signed off. He made impossible demands on his officers...especially the 2nd officer and myself. Many a time, when in port, I was roused in the middle of the night just to do a few minutes' work. The captain's quarters were on the starboard side opposite mine and he would have his door open...seeing me come out to go ashore in the evening he would call me over to give me work that he insisted be done right away. Once I climbed out my porthole to the deck and sneaked off ship because I knew he was watching for me to come out of my cabin.

As time passed, the captain's drinking increased and his behaviour became more unpredictable. On our second trip south, the day we crossed the equator, there was much partying among the passengers and the captain had been imbibing freely. The 2nd officer came on watch at midnight and studied the chart where the captain had set the course earlier. He became anxious as he saw that it was set directly toward one of the Galapagos Islands. The old man wasn't in his cabin and the 2nd officer was not supposed to change the course without the captain's permission. Further searching couldn't locate the captain so the 2nd officer took it upon himself to change course and just in time as the island was looming up only about two miles ahead.

In Buenos Aires it was not prudent to make any comments in public about President Peron or his wife but the captain was not a prudent man and spent a night's detention in cells as a result.

By this time the old man was totally ignoring letters or queries from our owners and going pretty much his own way.

We had made three complete trips around South America and back to the west coast when on our fourth trip, in B.A., we learned "Siranger" had been taken out of the run and was under charter to go to India with a load of grain. For the next two years we led a gypsy-existence.

So we set sail for India with the old man drinking almost continuously and behaving very erratically...issuing ridiculous commands which had to be carried out without question. By this time the chief officer was kept completely in the dark and I had to sneak him glances at messages so he would know what was going on. The captain would have me dashing back and forth to his cabin dictating messages and cancelling them five minutes later. I would collapse in my bunk at 1 or 2 in the morning, quite exhausted.



The old man so mixed up the orders received that he ignored instructions to proceed to Colombo, Ceylon to bunker and instead directed the ship to Vizagapatam on the southeast coast of India and he notified the owners of his intentions. A reply was expected from Bergen on the night we were nearing Ceylon. The old man turned in and gave me orders to stay on watch until I got through to Bergen and if there was a message to waken him. I had gone on watch at 6 p.m. and conditions were terrible. Finally, about 5:15 a.m., Bergen radio was faintly audible for a few minutes and I managed to get through. The message ordered us in no uncertain terms to proceed to Colombo. The captain was wakened and course was changed just in time as we were passing the southwest point of Ceylon. I had been in that hot stuffy shack for over 11 hours trying to get through and not even a thank you did I get...in fact, the old man was miffed when I said I couldn't get a reply back to Bergen.



**Kidderpore Docks Calcutta**

Forgetting the captain for a moment. Our two-month stay in Calcutta was most interesting. We tied up at #3 jetty Garden Reach Road and soon the ship was besieged with swarms of natives on board...shoemakers, tailors, laundrymen, peddlers, fortune tellers, magicians. Unloading was begun and it took the 200 native longshoremen just five days and nights to unload 7,000 tons of grain. All the grain was sacked in the holds before being taken ashore, the sacks being sewn by hand...the speed with which they worked was amazing.

After unloading "Siranger" was moved to the first anchorage spot near Kidderpore docks about 40 feet from shore and we had a small native boat to ferry us back and forth. On my first trip shore in Calcutta I was quite overwhelmed by the strangeness of my surroundings and decided never to venture ashore at night...but soon, in the company of another officer, we were exploring the market places, soaking up the atmosphere. The markets were a joy and I quickly got on to the custom of wrangling over prices.

Christmas in Calcutta was certainly different. Christmas Eve is the big celebration time for Norwegians...a boar's head was carried on high into the saloon, carols were sung, a tree gaily decorated...and the chief engineer was again Julenissen, Father Christmas. He carried in a huge seabag and distributed presents to all. Christmas day there was lots of good food to eat in the mess. That might not sound unusual but it was quite in contrast to the previous year in B.A. At that time the 2nd officer and I had been the only ones left on board Christmas Day and no food at all was provided...and that was my first Christmas away from home!

New Year's Eve in Calcutta was my most memorable ever. Four officers from "Siranger," myself included, had been invited by the head of the stevedoring company to join him and his family at Firpo's...the best night club in Calcutta. The place was packed and it was wonderful to watch...the Indian women were exquisite in their rainbow-hued saris, the men were colorful too...army, navy, air force and merchant navy officers in uniform and Indian men in native dress. At midnight the scene became a kaleidoscope of colour...everyone crowding onto the dance floor, singing Auld Lang Syne and passing around the cup that cheers. We made it back on board by 5 a.m. which is a respectable hour after a New Year's celebration.

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## SEVEN YEARS A WIRELESS GIRL —ROECKNER

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I went overboard in the markets and bought many wonderful things ...rugs, carved table, inlaid boxes, ivory, embroidered silks. I found a fantastic dressmaker opposite Hogg Market who could copy any photo from a Paris couterie magazine and turn out beautiful clothes for a few rupees and in days only...small wonder that I have always wanted to return there.

One of the minor highlights of our visit in Calcutta was that I met an honest-to-goodness Maharajah and Prince while visiting at the Great Eastern Hotel with the captain and 2nd officer.

"Siranger" returned to Argentina and from B.A. travelled up the Parana river to Rosario and then to San Lorenzo, a very small village. Had the good fortune to tie up next to a British ship and the officers entertained me royally. After speaking broken or simple English for so long, with a mixture of Norwegian and Spanish, it was a treat to really speak English again. I was always hoping to meet up with a Canadian vessel as at time I got quite homesick but no such luck.

We received word that we would go to Sweden and enroute called at San Vincente in the Cape Verde Islands to bunker. By now, conditions onboard were very bad. Food was quite inedible, the captain's behaviour become more bizarre every day and the crew were muttering mutinously.



### Return to Home Port

After leaving San Vincente we ran into such rough seather that our arrival in Sweden was delayed five days. In one 24-hour period we only got 98 miles. One night a few seams in the hull opened, water got into the oil and the engines failed. Lights went out, bells, buzzers and the auto alarm rang and without control the ship swung into the trough of the waves and rolled like mad with everything movable hitting the deck with resounding crashes all over the ship.

Finally arrived at Stockholm and it was a terrific mad whirl for me signing off crewmembers and clearing up the captain's neglected work. You see the old man had been sacked. Later it was changed to an enforced holiday. Much later, when he had done his penance this captain was given the oldest ship in the company ...a coal burner. I heard that during his first trip on it he ran her aground in the St. Lawrence and thus ended his career.

Fed up with working night and day in port I demanded a weekend off and made a flying visit to Norway to visit friends. Actually went by train but had to hire a small plane to make it back on time...but it was worth every penny just to relax in the countryside for a few days.

### New Skipper



Our new skipper, Capt. Belt, was older and a real company man. Very conscientious, exact and outspoken, with a low boiling point. He had inherited a real mess aboard "Siranger." I heard he had never had a woman sparks onboard before and was not enchanted by the idea. Months later he was overheard to say I was the best secretary and radio operator he had ever sailed with. News that delighted me immensely as he was not a man to tolerate mistakes or carelessness. I have seen ship's agents and others go ashore quaking after receiving one of the captain's tongue lashings.

We went to Gdansk, Poland, next and remember this was just a little more than two years after the war. The ship was tied up at the side of a canal...there were shell holes everywhere, shattered trees, burned-out trucks, gun pieces and a blasted-out fortification. We had to cross the canal by rowboat to make our way to the city, or what was left of it. Blocks and blocks of rubble everywhere. On the remaining walls of many buildings and houses were posted faded danger warnings in Polish with pictures of skull and crossbones. As we walked along the streets a faint, persistent rotten smell assailed our nostrils and we wondered about the thousands of bodies that must still lie beneath the ruins.

I had been used to seeing maritime police in South America wearing revolvers but here, in Poland, was my first introduction to soldiers carrying machine guns.

### Awesome Paper Work

We loaded coal in Gdansk for La Spezia, Italy...a cargo I hated for obvious reasons. I was delighted with my introduction to the Mediterranean. La Spezia is a small town near Genoa, very quaint, nestled around the gulf and up the hillsides. From here we were to go to Constanza, Roumania, stopping enroute at Istanbul to sell 500 tons of our oil. While there we received instructions from our agents in Roumania concerning all the lists necessary and it was awesome. The instructions ran like this... "members of the crew are insisently requested to comply strictly with all regulations in order to avoid ships authorities and themselves great trouble, heavy fines, law suits and prison." We left Istanbul at 5 a.m. and all that day and night I worked on the necessary papers. Personal effects lists had to be detailed and include every coin of every currency in everyone's possession. After being taken through the mine fields we docked at elevator buildings where large photos of Stalin, Lenin and Roumanian communist leaders were displayed amid faded bunting... this was just after the May 1st celebrations. It took until the early afternoon to clear the ship and everything that could be sealed was. All the crew were assembled on the afterdeck and our passports scrutinized. We had to remain there while our cabins and the entire ship was thoroughly searched. Fortunately everything was as it should be and the agent complimented the captain upon the thoroughness with which the lists had been made out. My radio equipment was sealed as well, I might add.



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## Under Armed Guard

(Continued from Page 10)

Armed soldiers guarded the gangplank and patrolled the dock. Only ten people were allowed ashore each day, issued with special passes. Constanza is today quite a tourist resort but at that time my impression was of a very poor place...few cars, the occasional bus and many small wooden carts drawn by shaggy ponies. Peasants were barefoot, soldiers were everywhere and people had to line up at the state-owned store. After ten dreary days we left the ship being thoroughly searched for stowaways before leaving.

Next stop Norway...which brought joy to many of the officers and crew as it was the first time "Siranger" had called there. Then to Norfolk, Virginia, to load coal for Sweden. Never knowing where we would go next had its attractions and we were certainly seeing a lot more of the world.

## QRD Leningrad

There was great excitement onboard when we learned we would go next to Leningrad. I was also very concerned thinking about the necessary papers to be prepared. If it was strict in Roumania then surely it would be ever so much more so in Russia! So I duplicated everything I had prepared for Constanza. Surprisingly enough, in this regard, the Russians were a little more lenient and they were pleased with my efforts. However the authorities who came onboard not only wanted to seal my radio equipment, they wanted to lock and seal the radio shack as well. I argued the matter with an army major, as well as one can argue when not speaking the language...and won my point! The entire crew were rounded up under armed guard below deck while every nook and cranny on the ship was searched and each individual's papers were carefully studied.

During our stay crew and officers were taken on a tour of the Czar's Winter Palace. We were there a few hours but only managed to view a few rooms and halls, perhaps less than a hundred and we were told there were more than a thousand rooms. We never travelled around on our own in Leningrad but were always picked up at the ship by bus. I spent three evenings at the Seaman's club which had at one time been an ornate mansion. Hostesses there spoke many languages. We were taught folk dancing and shown some excellent Russian movies.

The ship was thoroughly searched again before we left for New Jersey...having come from Russia the U.S. authorities were almost equally strict. At that time we had an American and Norwegian stewardess on board and the U.S. papers were very keen on interviews because it just wasn't possible to get behind the Iron Curtain and women seamen were a novelty.



1947 - ON DECK WITH FELLOW OFFICERS - L/R STEWARD LARS AMUNDSEN, 2nd OFFICER HERMAN NESTAD, 3rd MATE EIVAND GJERBAKK - WIRELESS OFFICER ROECKNER BOTTOM

From Stateside to Cuba. It was hurricane season but we slipped in and out between storms. Then back to Europe and on to Finland. It was October and the night was pretty stormy when we arrived off Raumo. A severe gale was sweeping the Gulf of Finland and coastal regions. We had a Finnish pilot aboard and as it was too stormy to enter port the ship was anchored. It seems that during the night we had begun to drift. The pilot decided to shift and the anchors were heaved up. As the ship was being moved, and before the anchors were down again, "Siranger" struck something and it was thought that she went aground on rocks. Oil was found on deck and it was reported that three tanks were leaking. Quite a lot of oil was lost before the big hole in #3 tank was stopped. I slept through all the excitement and didn't know a thing about it until 6:30 in the morning when the captain got me out of bed to try and work Bergen and get off what he called an emergency message. Fortunately Raumo had the only drydock that could accommodate us but because of the storm "Siranger" wasn't able to go in until a day later. It was discovered that damage extended the length of the ship and it was decided we must have hit the wreck of an old lighter which sank about 25 years before with a load of cement. There were three holes in the bottom and



SKIPPER - UNIFORM OF THE DAY - CUBA BOUND

deep dents and grooves. The Helsinki office of Norske Veritas, similar to Lloyds, sent an engineer and a sea court was held at the Norwegian consulate. Our owners were mad because we lost our cargo due to the delay. Being in drydock is no picnic as you know and the weather couldn't have been more miserable...bitter winds, rain and sleet, cold and some snow. The bathrooms were about a four-minute walk or two-minute sprint from the ship. A great sigh of relief went up when we left for Boston. Here the newspapers came aboard again and Lowell Thomas even made mention of us on one of his broadcasts.

Then on to Albany. The trip up river was picturesque and wintry. Being early December it was quite cold and there was ice on the river. My cabin was never warm and this is how I used to go to bed at night...blanket under the bottom sheet, two blankets doubled on top, pillow against the cold bulkhead, a pair of borrowed long johns, pj's, wool socks, hot water bottle and beaming down on me from my desk, a brand-new little heater that I had persuaded the captain to get after I almost froze in Finland.

## Nice Vibes from KPH

That year we spent Christmas at sea on the Pacific side of the Canal bound for the west coast again. Took on cargo then turned around headed back to Europe. While in Frisco and Oakland I had been interviewed and was pleased to be told by KPH that they had my picture up in the station. What delighted me even more was to be told by one of the operators there that I had a good fist.



"JACK TAR" ROECKNER PILOTING A "SHIP OF THE DESERT" ALONG THE BEACH AT KARACHI PAKISTAN - 1950.

During the next few months we touched many of the major ports in Europe before hitting new territory...the Suez, with a brief stop at Port Said and Aden, where I came close to being abducted, then finally to Bombay. Dreadful timing as it was just before the monsoons. I thought I had known hot weather before but nothing to compare with that. From Bombay to Karachi and then the Persian Gulf. Our first night in Basrah, Iraq we experienced a sudden wind of tremendous force. It was brief and only lasted about an hour and a half. The wind hit on our port, deck, side and all four ships moored there were blown away from the quay. Only one managed to get both anchors down but we others landed across and down river up against the opposite bank. Eventually a British navy tug came up river and pulled us all back to Basrah. Ashore houses and trees were blown down and everything loose on deck had disappeared. We moved to Abadan and then Khoramshar in Iran before returning to Karachi. Here some of the crew and officers enjoyed a rare free day. We took one of the lifeboats to the beach, lazed around and went camel riding.

(Continued on Page 12)



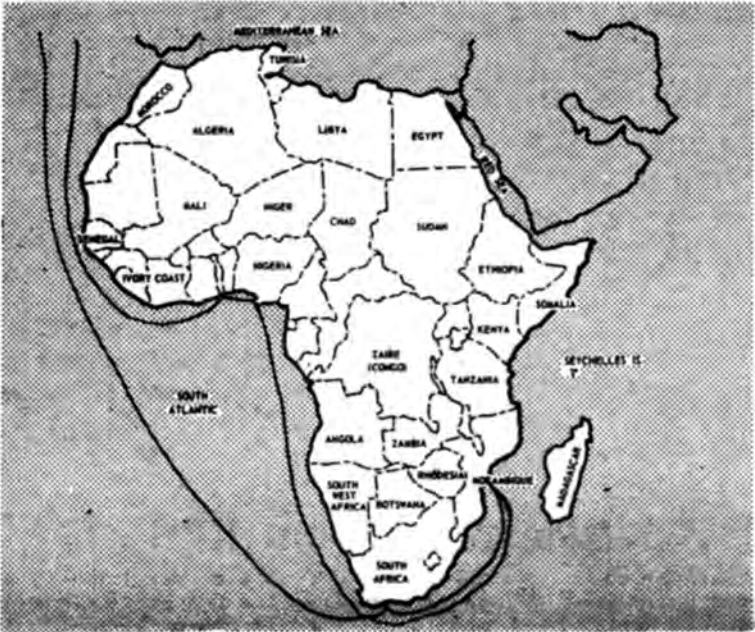
SEVEN YEARS A WIRELESS GIRL —ROECKNER

(Continued from Page 11)

UGH !

I'm afraid that by this time the food onboard was again inedible and I would stock up on biscuits and tins of fruit to tide myself over from port to port. Complaints didn't seem to make much difference. The steward told someone to get another ship if he didn't like the food, the captain seemed quite indifferent and the cooks were dreadful. To give you an idea here is one day's menu which I wrote home in a letter. Breakfast - cold, slimy fishcakes, dinner - soup was a liquid oatmeal porridge, main course - greyish potatoes, sad-looking fish and stewed celery, supper - fish stew. That day I ate salt crackers and some canned sardines. The bread was so full of worms I didn't have the stomach to tackle it. The crew sent the union representative to complain to the old man in Bombay but he pulled his yelling act and nothing was achieved.

How happy I was when we arrived back in the Med again. Every moment I could get ashore in Europe I headed for the nearest restaurant. About this time I was beginning to dream of food and I had lost 20 pounds since joining "Siranger." Our steward signed off and his replacement was an improvement although the old man was still pretty tight with the purse strings. Food became a little better and I stuffed myself at every meal whether hungry or not.



Africa Calls

By now I had been at sea almost four years and was beginning to think I should take a holiday...but when word came that the ship would be going to Africa I decided...maybe not just yet! Enroute we made a brief stop at Las Palmas and then on to Capetown. While there the decision on whether or not I should sign off was taken out of my hands. I had not been feeling well for some time and the doctors said I was run down, anaemic and must have a rest. So more than four years without a holiday, long hours of hard work and poor food had taken its toll. Once the decision had been made that I would sign off on return to Europe I felt better. Other African ports of call were in Mozambique, Nigeria and Sierra Leone,



SHORESIDE LEAVE - LAGOS, NIGERIA 1950. "TIGER" BOATMAN PADDLES OLIVE ASHORE TO SEE THE SIGHTS.

OLIVE J. ROECKNER [nee CARROL] NOW LIVES IN SCENIC BRITISH COLUMBIA AT KASLO. SHE SERVED AT POINT GREY WIRELESS/VAI 1945-1947 BEFORE BEING POSTED TO THE M/V. SIRANGER/LLMK.. SHE IS SOWP MEMBER # 2891-V AND HAS AMATEUR CALL - VE7ERA. PHOTO COURTESY "VANCOUVER DAILY PROVIDENCE" 1948.

then back to Europe. I had started packing my accumulation of souvenirs and luggage in South Africa and I was still packing on arrival in Europe. We went to northern Sweden and ironically here, in the stormy Gulf of Bothnia, I was seasick again for the first time in four years...it seemed a fitting finale to my days as a sea-going sparks.

In Retrospect

Memory plays tricks on one. I had thought that there had been no problems at all with my equipment, as far as I could recall but, on checking my diaries, it seems I did have breakdowns and troubles from time to time but they were never major and I was always able to get things operating again. It was a source of satisfaction to me that I was always treated with complete equality onboard. There were never any concessions made to me because I was a girl, except one. The portable emergency lifeboat transmitter was too heavy for me to carry to the lifeboat and one of the seamen took care of this. In boat drill I had to man the oars along with the rest of the officers and crew. Although at times we carried one or two stewardesses onboard usually I was the only woman in a crew of 36 and I was treated with respect and considered to be "one of them." I was always addressed as Gnisten, Telegrafisten or Frkn. Carroll and only one young seaman ever took liberties in speaking to me. His name was Hjalmar Jensen and I can picture him so clearly even now...straight straw blond hair, merry blue eyes, a broken front tooth which always showed in his saucy grin. He had a slight stammer and if he passed me out on deck at all he would give me a sideways glance and murmur... "G-g-g-good m-m-m-morning d-d-d-darling!"

Italian R.I. Pays Visit

I was highly amused once in Italy when a radio inspector came aboard to check the station. We conversed in Italian on his part and broken Spanish on mine. He was amazed to find a woman radio operator and gave me to understand, with much gesticulation, that such a situation would be impossible on an Italian vessel... I had the impression that all those hot-blooded Italians would be pounding on the radio shack door!!

There were so many incidents that occurred during those years... every day seemed to be eventful. The ship had its share of close calls, crew members took ill or were injured, a couple even ran amok...there were personal tragedies and little triumphs. I stored up a lifetime of wonderful memories and made some very dear friends.

Olive Swallows the Hook—Says '30'

I signed off "Siranger" in Bergen where the new operator took over but I accompanied the ship to Boston and said my farewells there. "Siranger" had been under charter for almost two years but right after I left her she went back on the original run around South America. I returned home to Vancouver for a well-earned rest. Six months later Capt. Belt asked if I would rejoin the ship but it was too soon for me and I guess I had swallowed the hook for good. "Siranger" was sold to the Uruguayan government a few years later and replaced by a new, Norwegian-built vessel of the same name.

I have never shared my reminiscences with anyone else before, thinking that they could be of interest only to me...but through the Sparks Journal I have learned that I share so much with so many. I am very proud to have had a small part in the history of radio.





# The Pioneer Wireless Women

*Society of Wireless Pioneers, Inc.*



STELLA J. CAYO



Back in the old spark days, every wireless operator who walked into the Seattle office of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company for the first time soon learned that the cheerful brown-haired girl who greeted him was named Stella Cayo. Whether he needed a job, a transfer, or a relief, he always found Miss Cayo to be an attentive and sympathetic listener. After she learned the man's name, it stayed in her memory forever. She never forgot a name, or a face, or the name of the ship the man was assigned to. In those days, she was probably personally acquainted with more operators than anyone else on the Pacific Coast. To the countless numbers of wireless operators who pushed open the door of Room 512 in the Maritime Building on the Seattle waterfront, Stella Cayo was someone special.

Although she never stood a watch on 600 meters, Stella Cayo was a real wireless pioneer and her memory is revered by the many SOWP members who received their shipboard assignments from her.

Born in Eureka, California, Stella came to Seattle with her parents when she was just a child. She lived in Seattle for the rest of her life. In August of 1913, she went to work as a stenographer in the Seattle office of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company.

Her first boss was Manager Jack Erwin, a former wireless operator who had distinguished himself by sending out the first distress call from an aircraft - the dirigible America. Miss Cayo learned the marine wireless business quite rapidly and soon she was taking calls from steamship companies and assigning operators.

The outbreak of World War I brought about an enormous increase in the demand for shipboard wireless installations and operators to man them. When the Marconi manager in Seattle was transferred to another assignment, Miss Cayo then in her twenties, was appointed Acting Manager. During the entire wartime period, when marine wireless activities were at a peak, Miss Cayo was the boss of the Marconi depot and office in Seattle.

One of the Marconi employees reporting to Miss Cayo was shipboard inspector Henry Barker. It was quite a sight to see Henry walking along the waterfront, trailing behind him a child's coaster wagon, bright red in color, loaded down with his Marconi wavemeter, decimeter and other bulky test equipment. The Marconi wavemeter is now in a local museum.

When the newly formed Radio Corporation of America took over the Marconi company on

November 20, 1919, the most valuable asset they acquired in the Seattle office was Miss Stella Cayo. An article in "Wireless Age," an early RCA publication, quotes one operator as saying, "Gee, if Miss Cayo should ever die, an awful lot of useful information will have disappeared forever." The same article states that Miss Cayo had the longest unbroken service record of any employee in the Pacific Division of RCA.

While serving as secretary to a succession of managers at the Seattle RCA office from 1919 to 1929, she also had the responsibility for handling shipboard operator assignments. Every spring, when more freighters were needed for the seasonal Alaskan run, and more passenger ships went into service for the summer tourist trade, Miss Cayo's beach list would dwindle to nothing and operator procurement became a serious problem. She was especially considerate to many young men trying to finance a University education by shipping out during the spring and summer months. Without her help, many radio operators would never have had a chance to continue their education.

In 1929 when George Street was Seattle manager for RCA, he moved his office to the headquarters of the RCA Communications Company in the Dexter Horton Building. Stella Cayo went with him. The following year George Street was transferred to Shanghai and Earl Baker was appointed manager of the Seattle RCA office. Stella Cayo went back to the Maritime Building, reporting to Earl Baker, and helping him become familiar with the managerial aspects of the marine radio business. In 1935, when a nationwide depression caused lay-offs in many organizations, Miss Cayo was transferred back to the RCAC office in Seattle. She stayed with RCAC until May 18, 1950, when death closed her career.

During her 37 years of service to the marine radio industry, she had helped hundreds of men to get jobs in radio. Some stayed in the marine field while others went on to careers in other branches of the expanding radio industry. Many of those she had helped are SOWP members today. They remember Miss Cayo as someone special. Yes, Stella Cayo was someone special, someone to remember.

by Al Johnson 461-SGP

## SEA-GOING EXPERIENCES OF A "YL" RADIO OFFICER

By—Kirsti Jenkins Smith

I have been trying to think of something suitable in the way of experiences for publication. I really think life as a YL-opr. was not much different from that of an OM-opr. By 1956 YL's had become quite accepted in Scandinavian ships and we were treated just like any other member of the crew. The first couple of ships I served on were rather old. M/S Adour was a 1930's model tanker converted to iron ore carrier. This being my first ship accounts for my lasting memory of her. The radio shack was tiny (was it an afterthought?) and had generators whirring away under the table. The emergency Tx was a spark transmitter and there were no facilities at all for phone, just MV and SW A1-operation.

Fresh out of school at the ripe old age of 20, I was, needless to say, terrified at the thought of being the only one on board who knew anything about operating and servicing the monsters. Luckily the captain was not unduly worried whether I made immediate contact with anyone or not. He left me to my own devices, but was naturally pleased (and surprised) when I actually got things working. So was I. That first trip took us from Liverpool, UK, to Monrovia in Liberia and upon our return to UK I felt pretty good about it all.

The other old model ship was the S/S Regulus which carried iron ore from Narvik in northern Norway to Ghent in Belgium during autumn and winter 1956/57. It was a bit rough, weather wise, and accommodation-wise with frozen water pipes and decks, continuous stormy weather and the ship springing

(Continued on Page 16)



THE PROVINCE, Wednesday, August 19, 1970

**PROUD SMILE** belongs to Dallas Bradshaw, 28, of Victoria, who has earned it. Pictured aboard the ore ship M.V. Duncraig docked at Middlesborough, Yorkshire, England, she is Britain's first woman radio operator on ships.



USS NEVERSAIL  
Log



OR—Enjoy some LEVITY with your LONGEVITY

Ship Log USS NEVERSAIL April 1, 1933

- 0800 Tied up buoy 45XZ San Diego, Calif. Sea smooth weather clear barometer 29.9999
- 0815 All hands muster on station, no unauthorized absentees.
- 0820 Secured main radio, directed deck crew to lower main antenna for repairs
- 1200 Noon meal, checked chronometer with WWV
- 1400 Antenna repairs completed, deck gang instructed to secure main antenna in place
- 1412 Received message from Flagship  
"YOUR VISUAL MESSAGE NOT UNDERSTOOD IMPOSSIBLE TO DECODE, REPEAT"
- 1415 Sent message to Flagship  
"NO VISUAL MESSAGE ORIGINATED FROM THIS SHIP"
- 1420 Message from Flagship  
"UNABLE DECODE YOUR VISUAL MESSAGE, IS YOUR SIGNALMAN DRUNK"
- 1422 Sent message to Flagship  
"MY SIGNALMAN IS SOBER..ARE YOU"
- 1430 Message from Flagship  
"IMMEDIATELY REMOVE UNAUTHORIZED ITEMS HANGING FROM YOUR ANTENNA AND MAKE FULL WRITTEN REPORT..WE AINT FOOLING"
- 1435 Directed OOD to inspect antenna and remove any unauthorized items immediately
- 1450 Main antenna lowered, the following items were hanging on main antenna, three empty buckets, five wire brushes, three paint brushes and many dirty assorted rags!
- 1530 Deck gang instructed to haul up antenna and secure all lines
- 1600 Antenna in place, normal operation, direct OOD to make full written report
- 1603 Navigation Officer reports one large searchlight, RDF antenna and one compass missing from Bridge. Instructed OOD to make full investigation and submit a written report immediately

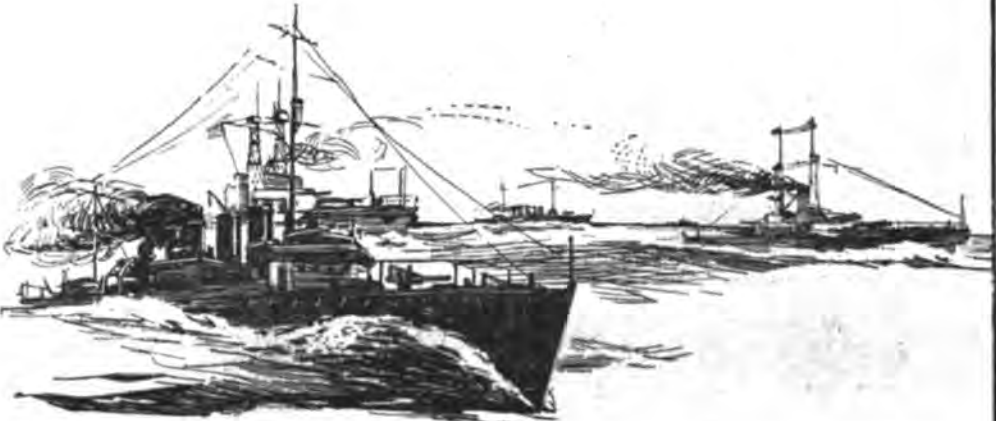
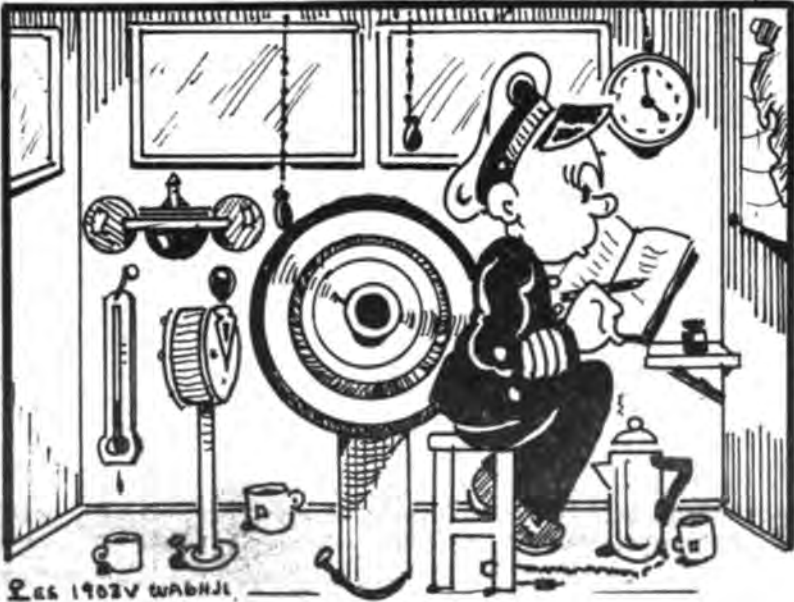
2230 The following written report submitted by OOD..copy will be forwarded to Flagship

"Dear Captain"  
"My name is Rufus Klutz and I am in charge of the deck division..at 0820 the OOD told us to lower the mail antenna so it could be cleaned and repaired...we lowered all them long wires which wuz all over the topside..Then all these crazy radio guys came out with buckets of kerosene, wire brushes, paint brushes and a whole lot of rags...they all started cleaning the dirty antenney and having a big time..we thought they wuz funished so we hauled the antenney back up on the mast...The long wires got all tangeld up in the rigging or something...we tugged and pulled and we got the dadblamed antenney clear and we hauled it up..Then here comes the Navigation Officer screeching and hollering..he told the OOD that his stuff on the flying bridge had disappeared..He said that big ole searchlight just vanished and went flying over the side...Then all the signal lights on the yardarm came down and then that Radio Compass antenney went flying off the bridge and he wanted to know what the blooming blazes wuz hopenning...The OOD said he would check it out and then here comes that little fillippineoo messboy..he was hollering and screeching that the big radio receiver in the officers ward room had vanished..The OOD sent his messenger to investigate the vanishing broadcast receiver and in a few minutes he tool the OOD the officers radio was setting up there in Lifeboat number 2..I aint sure what happened but it looks like that big antenney got tangled up with that searchlight on the bridge and pulled it over the side...and I think the aerial on the Officers broadcast receiver kinda got tangled up with the wires on the antenney and when he pulled up that big antenney that is when all the damage happened..We removed the receiver from the life boat but I dont think it will work any more..The OOD called me an idiot but I told him I was a methodist and then he tole me to write up this report to tell you what happened...I aint so sure what happened..but I did the best I could..He suggested that I should put in fer a transfer to some other ship...I dont want too. I am happy here on this ship..I hope you are the same.

yours trueuely  
Rufus

- PS I dont think the OOD should have restricted me
- 2300 The above written report sent by guardmail to flagship
  - 2315 Instructed supply officer to get new searchlight for bridge
  - 2330 Signed purchase order for new Receiver for Officers Ward room
  - 2359 Normal ship routine, I hope.

LOG ENTRIES!





# LESLIE FUNSTON'S GALLERY

## THE FLIP SIDE OF HISTORY





# SOWP'S WEATHER "GAL"



**WOE IS ME (L)**

Dear Linda--

I have a little complaint  
which I'll try to express, quite quaint--

You're driving him mad,  
And he's making me sad--  
(It's my husband, you see, so don't faint!)

He is an "old Salt"  
So has a great fault  
Of maps and directions, please know,

The sea and the tide  
With the winds that are sighed  
'Counter-clockwise' for rain, which is low.

He pulls at his hair  
When he jumps from his chair  
And echos your words with a YIP!

"Her hand, I can see  
Moves wrong! Woe is me!  
We'd be wrecked on the sea in our Ship!"

But please, do not fret  
In directions to get  
Of the wind in circle to Eye--

Sweep the "Low" with your hand  
'Counter-Clockwise' in land  
And "Clockwise" when pressures are "High"!

BRENDA GRUMMET

Sent By "Mel" Grummet  
"SPARKS" - SS Coyote - 1919

## SEA-GOING EXPERIENCES OF A "YL" RADIO OPERATOR

—BY—

KIRISTI JENKINS SMITH

(Continued from Page 13)

leaks and experiencing engine trouble until she was laid up and then sold. I then went on to oil tankers and stayed in sunny, calm waters on modern ships until I retired from the sea to become a housewife. I had married Joe, a Norfolk Islander in the meantime and stayed at sea until less than two months before my first child was born. I went for ante-natal check-ups in various ports and was generally treated like a rotten egg by everyone. I now have three children, 20, 16 and 13 years old. Joe died two years ago.

My years at sea are a very dear memory and I would not have wanted to miss anything of it. And can't you just see me in the rocking chair with my knitting, gathering the dear grandchildren around me, talking about bygone days....if I find the time now that I have taken up ham radio...

I must also tell you that I have recently re-married. My OM is Jim/VK9NS, formerly P29JS. He is James Bruce Smith, and I now use the name Jenkins Smith.

### THE FIRST WOMAN RADIO OPERATOR SENT TO SEA

In our January issue Baltimore laid claim to the sending of the first woman operator to sea, the date being December, 1917. This has been challenged, and research into the archives reveals its inaccuracy. Back in 1910, Mrs. Tucker was assigned to the Indianapolis, running out of Seattle. In 1912, Miss Mabel Kelso was assigned to the Mariposa, plying between Seattle and Alaska; and during the same year Mrs. Sickles was detailed to the Roanoke, also in the Pacific division. Also in 1912, Miss Grayella Packer was placed on the Clyde Liner Mohawk, and in 1917, Miss Elizabeth L. Du Val entered service on the Merchants and Miners liner Howard. This we believe, brings the American record up to date. Now let's hear from our foreign contemporaries.

EARLY DAY CLIPPING - SOURCE UNKNOWN



Linda Carole Gialanella  
Ch.5 "News-Weather"

LINDA CAROLE GIALANELLA - ( SOWP. "WX" GAL )  
CHANNEL 5 = "NEWS-WEATHER" WNEW-TV METROMEDIA  
205 EAST 67th ST. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021



## Sea Chest

My sea chest is filled with memories  
Gathered throughout the seven seas.  
Bits of flotsam and jetsam too,  
Memories of a favorite crew  
That helped raise hell on a foreign shore,  
Alas for me, they'll sail no more.

Time has passed and the mighty spark,  
The organ tones of the rotary arc.  
The dusky virgins of Pacific isles  
Who spoke of love with eager smiles,  
Pirates and smugglers, nefarious schemes  
Are a precious legacy of golden dreams.

There's fond memories of Banana Pete  
Who's cw swing was pure and sweet  
Music to a thousand ears  
That copied his traffic over the years.  
There's many others, with stylish fist.  
Never forgotten! Forever missed!

Remember the gulls? A porpoise or two?  
The thrill of answering a plaintive CQ?  
Games of checkers played over the air  
From a radio shack's comfortable chair.  
Tales and lies about girls once won,  
If even untrue, they were lots of fun.

My memory treasure is the silver and gold  
Of twilight dreams, when stories are told  
Of elusive signals, a CQD,  
Of fear and death on a stormy sea,  
Iced up antennas, slippery wet decks,  
Tortured ships and gruesome wrecks.

When it's time for my last long cruise  
I hope the Lord will let me choose  
To sail away to that Heavenly land  
With my faithful key, clutched in my hand.  
On that distant shore please let me find  
A wireless station, the Brass Pounders kind!

Ken Johnson SOWP #2308-P





# grandma goes to sea

*proving it's never too late to make your move;  
you could wind up radio officer on a 641-foot tanker*

by Martin W. Krey

Lodi Yarbrough tries not to make a big deal of being the only woman on board a 641-foot tanker. But there was one time in an East Coast port when she had to prove herself.

"I came back to the ship with a pack of Coke and an armful of other purchases," she said. "The ship was empty and riding high in the water, and there at the rail above me was the whole crew, watching to see if I could climb the ship's ladder without help.

"Not one hand was extended to help me," Mrs. Yarbrough said, "and I could tell from the smiles and comments what was expected of me."

She jammed the pack of Coke under one arm and her other supplies under the other arm and climbed the ship's ladder. "Somehow I made it to the top, and when I stuck my head over the rail and dropped my supplies on the deck, the whole crew cheered and someone said, 'Now, Lodi, you are really a part of the crew.'"

When Mrs. Yarbrough swings her seabag over the gunwale of the S.S. Cove Communicator, she becomes the only female sea-going radio officer in the nation's three major maritime unions. The Cove Communicator plies the Gulf Coast and delivers oil to New England.

She is the wife of Scottsdale dermatologist Dr. Carl Yarbrough. "The crew calls chief radio officer Ron Hill 'Sparky,' and they call me 'Sparkette,'" she said, "but I am really Mama to the whole crew."

Mrs. Yarbrough is used to the mama role. When she goes to sea, she leaves not only her husband but two grown sons, two daughters and one granddaughter ashore. Except for Captain Dana Dillon and the chief radio officer, the crew of thirty on the tanker is usually young enough to be her sons. The chief mate on a recent voyage was 27, the second mate was 25, and the third mate was 23. The able bodied seamen were all in their 20s.

When she first boarded the 35,000-ton oil tanker in Boston last November 6, she found the crew on her side. "The old taboo about having a woman aboard is dead," she said. "Every man on the crew is one hundred percent supportive. The fellas have even cleaned up their language for me, though I didn't really expect it."

Mrs. Yarbrough got interested in radio at Christmas, 1975 when she bought her husband a citizens' band radio for his car.

"I thought it would be fun for him to talk on the radio to and from his office," she said, "but there were so many other people talking that it wasn't the pleasure I had hoped."

But the CB whet Dr. Yarbrough's interest. He had been an aviation radioman in the Navy in World War II. Before long he was talking ham radio. Mrs. Yarbrough figured that through radio she could meet a lot of interesting people, so she asked her husband to teach her the radio code.

"I drummed out the code with my fingertips on the table and said so many dah-dit-dah's that people began to wonder about us," Dr. Yarbrough said, "but Lodi picked up the code very quickly."

She signed up for a novice radio operator's course from the Scottsdale Educational Enrichment Service in early 1976, and her husband studied her course texts. Both passed the novice tests and got their licenses to operate with code in May, 1976. By that July, both had learned enough about ham radio to get advanced amateur licenses, and they began broadcasting voice communication from their Paradise Valley home.

Mrs. Yarbrough said, "We began meeting really wonderful people on the air."

In September, she flew to Los Angeles for her amateur extra license test, and there she received her first setback.

"I got so nervous that I couldn't hit the paper with my pencil," she said. "I failed my test."

But the Scottsdale Radio Club, which the Yarbroughs had joined, elected her president. "They just wanted to show me that it didn't matter if I had failed the test," she said.

Tom Moore, manager at Barry Goldwater's military affiliate radio station, AFA6UGA, invited Mrs. Yarbrough to become a volunteer operator, sending and receiving messages for servicemen in the Pacific. She donated her time for the next two years. Meanwhile, she continued studying for the amateur extra license and got it in September, 1977.

About the only goal left in the license field was getting a commercial radio license, so she began studying.

"I took a Caribbean cruise in nineteen seventy-eight," she said, "and it was so calm and peaceful at sea that I got a great chance to study for my commercial license."

Several months after she got back from the cruise, she took the commercial license test and passed.

"The Federal Communications Commission examiner asked me which ship I was going to sail on," she said, "and I told him, 'None, yet. My license might just become wallpaper.'"

But it wasn't long before she was sending employment inquiries to shipping companies.

"Cove Shipping Incorporated of New York City was the most responsive," she said. "Eventually they said I could have a radio operator's job. But I had to join the union first, so I located the biggest and oldest maritime union and joined."

Her family supported her going to sea but, at the last minute, her mother objected. "She thought I'd be gone for the whole six months I'd signed up for, and she said, 'But, Lodi, what about poor Carl?'"



Lodi Yarbrough and her chair were flipped over by a violent roll during a recent Atlantic storm.

Mrs. Yarbrough explained that she would fly back to the Valley once a month, or Dr. Yarbrough could fly to wherever the ship would be in port. They would get to see each other for the two to four days it took to load the ship with oil.

Mrs. Yarbrough describes her job as the best job on the ship. "It's even better than the captain's job," she said. "The pay is very good. I'm on duty from eight to twelve, three to five, and six to eight, and all the rest of the time is my own. I'm off duty while the ship is in port, and I can sightsee or do anything or go anywhere I want to."

She will be the second radio officer until she gets what is called a "six months' endorsement" this month. As an officer, she eats at the captain's table, gets her fourteen by twenty-foot cabin cleaned and her bed made, and she gets her sheets and towels washed.

"But I still have to do my own personal laundry," she said. "And on an old hand wringer washer at that."

When Mrs. Yarbrough goes on duty, her first job is to tune up all of the radio equipment. Then she gets a time check from the National Bureau of Standards radio station at Fort Collins, Colorado, and pipes it up to the bridge for the captain. During her watch, she must record one message heard on the 500KHz frequency every fifteen minutes. She also gets weather reports from coastal stations and listens for three minutes every half hour for emergency signals from ships in distress.

"I've heard two relayed SOSs from stricken ships and one triple-X emergency signal for a burning ship," she said.

Besides her radio duties, she does all of the clerical work for the captain, signs all hands on and off the ship, and makes up the payroll for the crew. One of her most appreciated duties is radioing in to the Sea View Company for eight to ten movies that the crew gets to watch every month.

"They're usually movies that I've seen ashore," Mrs. Yarbrough said, "but the crew enjoys them."

Once when the ship docked at New Orleans, Dr. Yarbrough flew in with a new amateur radio for her to use aboard ship. She asked Captain Dillon if she could install it on the ship so that she could talk to her husband back in Arizona every day.

"Heck, ya, bring that rascal on board," the captain said.

"Lodi comes booming into the Valley every noon and evening," Dr. Yarbrough said, "and I go home every day to talk to her. It sure helps to beat that lonesomeness."

Life at sea requires her to wear no special uniform. "The men wear regular work clothes, and I wear a blouse and slacks because of all the ladders we have to climb," she said. "I take short-sleeve blouses for Florida and the Gulf coasts and long-sleeve blouses for the New England waters. I've got so much winter clothes aboard that you wouldn't believe it. Even thermal underwear."

"We go from the tropics to the freezing north in five days," she said, "but everybody comes prepared, and there are very few illnesses at sea."

She said the food aboard the tanker is good but nothing fancy. "We had wine on the table only one time, at Christmas," she said.

On her first journey, Mrs. Yarbrough found her hair curlers and clothes iron to be superfluous, so she sent them home. "It was impossible with the wind and bad weather to keep my hair set and my clothes pressed, so I wear a scarf over my head and wear my clothes as they come out of the dryer."

She describes her quarters as expansive but austere, much larger than cabins aboard luxury liners. She has a table for her ham radio, a sofa, a chair, and a cot that is bolted to both the floor and a ship's bulkhead. "It's a wonderful place to study, paint, or read," she said. "Everybody on the crew reads good books, and then we pass them around."

The only time the crew can pick up television programs is when the ship is running south far out to sea along the coast of Florida. "Sometimes we're out so far so long without seeing anything that when a bird comes along, it is a positive delight," she said.

The big social event aboard ship is off-duty officers getting together in the officers' lounge in the evening to pop popcorn and talk.

(Continued on Page 18)





# Yodi Yarbrough "Tanker-woman"

## Her Story of an XYL's Life aboard a Tanker



(Continued from Page 17)

"We eat so much popcorn out at sea," she said, "that when we come into port, we sometimes have to walk for miles to find a store to replenish our stock."

She keeps a careful log of all of her unusual experiences at sea. An entry dated January 24, 1980, tells about the ship getting struck by force ten winds, near hurricane strength, off Cape Hatteras. The ship rocked so violently that Mrs. Yarbrough was thrown over backwards from her chair in the radio room.

"The most dangerous experience of all was having the hold fill up with explosive fumes one time

### Mrs. Yarbrough was thrown over backwards from her chair

"The wind blew the windows right out of the bridge on another ship," she said, "but we took on a lot of sea water ballast and rode low enough in the water to ride out the storm without damage."

She found out in that storm why her bed has a steel railing and extra pillows. "You don't use the pillows to sleep on," she said. "You stack them against the rail so you aren't injured when you're thrown against it. If it weren't for that railing, you'd be thrown right out."

Another entry tells about the ship ripping a hole in its bow while executing a turn without tugboats in a fog on the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge. "You don't turn a big ship easily in a small space," she said, "especially when it is over twice the length of a football field."

The ship struck either its own anchor or a submerged wreck, cutting a hole near the bottom that put the ship out of service for eleven days while divers struggled to close the gash. A diver got a rubber glove stuck in the hole, preventing the concrete seal from working, but when this was removed and new concrete poured inside the ship, the leak was stopped.

when an exhaust valve failed to work," she noted from her log. "The chief mate went down into the hold with an oxygen mask and others worked on the valve from up above, and they finally got the valve to open and expel the fumes."

Even going to the officers' mess can be a wild experience during a storm. "It always rains at mealtime," she said. "The radio room is in the center of the ship, and the mess hall is clear back by the fantail, a hundred yards away. Sometimes the wind and rain blow across or along the ship, and you've got to hang onto everything you can and fight every step of the way."

Once the chief mate invited Mrs. Yarbrough to take the wheel and steer the ship.

"He kept telling me that I was doing a good job," she said, "and after a while, when he had me feeling pretty good about my steering, he told me to look back at the wake, and it was terrible. It looked just like some big fish had swished its tail and zig-zagged through the ocean."

Last Christmas she was in port at Port Arthur, Texas, and could not get to Arizona to spend the holiday with her husband.

"I couldn't even reach him on ham radio," she said, "but I did manage to contact WA-Seven-MAL, a ham operator in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and he patched me into the telephone line and got Carl on the phone so that we could talk to each other. Without that I would have had one mighty lonely Christmas."

"That ham operator in Cheyenne felt so good about getting the two of us together that he never even sent us a bill for the long distance call," Dr. Yarbrough said.

Mrs. Yarbrough's ship was in dry-dock in April, so she got to spend four weeks at home with her husband. "They're going to give old 'Rust Bucket' a new coat of paint," she said then, "and then we're going to have to think of a new nickname for her."

With her tenure as an observer drawing to a close, she has thought about what she will do when she gets her endorsement as a chief radio operator. For a time, she considered signing onto one of the Cove Shipping Company's four super tankers so that her husband could go to sea with her.

"Each officer is permitted to bring a spouse aboard to sail with the ship for up to three months a year," she said.

### sea mama



At home with her husband, Scottsdale dermatologist Dr. Carl Yarbrough.

"But I've talked to crew members of the super tankers, and they tell me that the crew's quarters are right back by the three big engines that run the ship, and you've got all that noise and vibration to live with. They say that your cups and saucers even jump all over the mess table."

This pretty well precludes Mrs. Yarbrough taking her husband on a super tanker cruise, but something better may be available. The union is signaling her to come aboard more exotic vessels.

"They've asked me to join Hawaii-American Lines," she said, "and to be chief radio officer aboard the S.S. Oceanic Independence on its first luxury cruise to Hawaii. It's leaving just two days after I get my six months' endorsement, and I sure would like to take that job."

Her husband doesn't think she will. "It's too close to the end of her present assignment," he said, "and she's going to want to spend some time at home."

But he noted that there is always another ship going. "When she goes out to sea the next time, I'm sure hoping that I can get away and go along."

LODI'S STORY IS REPRINTED FROM "ARIZONA" NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED ON JUNE 1 1980. OUR THANKS TO "ARIZONA" AND ALSO TO AUTHOR MARTIN W. KREY FOR PERMISSION TO REPUBLISH THIS INTERESTING STORY OF XYL LORI YARBROUGH WHO IS SOWP MEMBER 3495-M. HER AMATEUR RADIO CALL IS AC7V. SHE LIVES (HOME PORT QTH) IS SCOTTSDALE ARIZONA WHILE NOT ABOARD THE SS COVE COMMUNICATOR.



Do sailors experience many thrills? Well, son, I'll say they do:

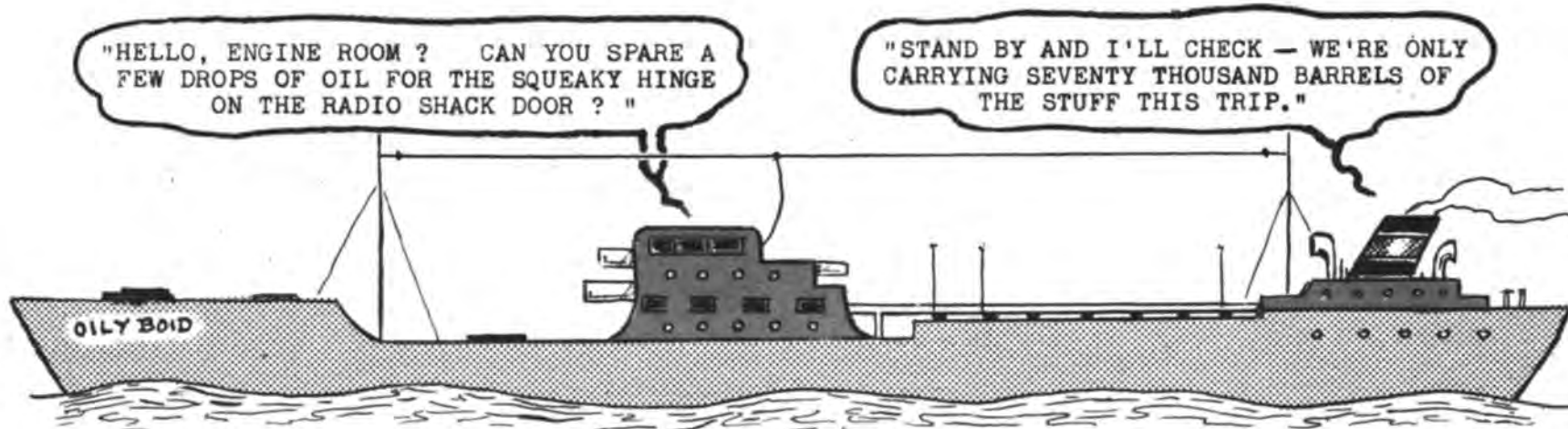
And, seeing that you've asked me I'll relate a few to you. It's not so much the work we do - As the places that we see And when I get to thinking Many scenes come back to me

I've been to dear old Italy - That far-off, sunny shore; A land of song and laughter. One could ask for nothing more In London I have had my fling - Piccadilly and the Strand; But English fog is not for me I prefer my native land.

With pleasure I recall the times I've been to gay Páree Where I tried to parle the lingo But could only say, "Wee! Wee!" And Germany - I've been there, too. And gazed upon the Rhine; But that was prior to "Der Tag" When Wilhelm tried to climb.

Took a sojourn to the Far East. Looked on many amazing sights: Felt the thrill that I'll remember From those Oriental nights. And I've been to Honolulu - By the beach called Waikiki. Where they do the hula hula In the moonlight by the sea.

Yes, son! It's great to travel In the free and easy way. But, somehow, a homesick feeling Seems to come at close of day. So I've come to the conclusion That, to me, the joy of joys Is to hear the Skipper saying - "We'll be home tomorrow, boys!"



Folkman • WBAF



# The wireless operator was a lady

By Robin Lord

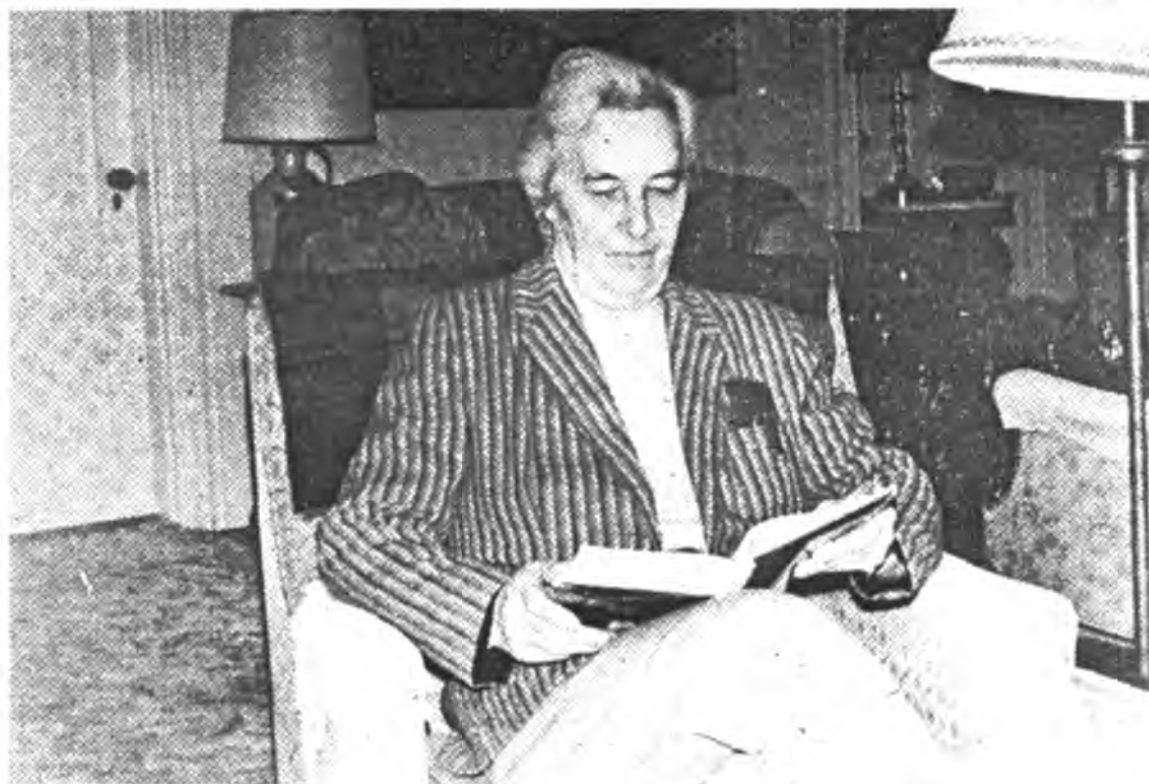
"We got a cat and now we got a woman - this is going to be some trip!" Those were the words of welcome Harwich Port resident Anne L. Smalley received from the captain nearly 50 years ago as she climbed aboard the Cities Service oil tanker SS Toledo to become the first woman wireless operator in the Merchant Marine.

The captain continued, "Young woman I don't know whether this is supposed to be some kind of joke, but there aren't any women radio officers, women crew members, or women period on my ship. Not in the entire Merchant Marine!"

Miss Smalley convinced him that her orders were correct and spent the next six months traveling with an all-male crew at sea. She has recounted her experiences in a book, "The Ship That Sang Soprano," for which she is currently looking for a publisher. The narrative tells of her acclimation to the crew and her trials in a man's world, from which she was spared little.

She tells of her tiny cabin with a sink which spurted constantly rusty water and a seatless toilet over which was a leaky shower. And she relates the agony of being tied to her chair in the radio room for 54 hours during a gale off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

Through her months at sea she established warm friendships with the crew members, who dubbed her "Sparklet," the feminine version of "Spark," a customary nickname for a radio officer.



Anne Smalley

But it is not the tale of her oil tank performance Miss Smalley endeavors to tell young people. "I want to give women a sense that they can do anything a man can do. Perhaps they're not as strong, but nowadays the training they have in the service is just as hard for women as it is for men."

Graduating from Harwich High School 60 years ago, a woman had basically two choices, says Miss Smalley, marriage or a career as a teacher or secretary. But for Anne L. Smalley, captain of the girls basketball team and descendant of a long line of sea-going captains, (including her grandfather Valentine D. Nickerson, who died in the Monomoy disaster in 1902.) life offered much more than that. In a newspaper account of her post-graduation ambitions, it was written, "The ambition of Miss Anne

Smalley is to become an air pilot. With this end in view, she goes to East Boston to become a student of aviation, believing that teaching, the work of a stenographer, or keeping books is too tame."

Miss Smalley later studied radio engineering, weather forecasting, and became a member of SPARS, the women's reserve of the Coast Guard. She achieved the rank of commander in that service branch.

She admits it has not been easy, struggling in a man's field, especially at a time in history when women traditionally remained in very few lines of work. She says she always held a philosophy given to her by a pilot friend early in her career, "Stand on your feet. Have them (the men) accept you on your own merits, not because you're a woman, but because of the job you do."



## "SEA INTERLUDE"

THE ADVENTURES OF A LADY "SPARKS"

WHO WENT TO SEA ON AN OIL TANKER

The irony of my sex-hidden signature, however, was compounded by the fact that in filing those applications, I listed as an acceptable second-choice assignment that of a communications operator at either a shore station traffic-relay center or land-based communications control center.

The application I mailed to Mackay Radio at 100 State St., Boston, Mass., resulted in a telegram: HAVE COMMUNICATION POSITION FOR YOU X ADVISE DECISION PRIOR TO 1600 THIS DATE X J WALKER.

I still remember the stunned, bewildered expression which erupted on the faces of that agency's office manager, Johnny Walker, and that of Captain Moller's when the full impact of my acceptance, sign unseen, really got through to them. Too, it took a while for the TOLEDO'S crew to return my daily greeting in a voice within the normal adult male range or walk passed me without tripping over their feet, or mine.

The TOLEDO was owned by the Cities Service Oil Company of 60 Wall Street, New York and commanded by one of Brooklyn's finest: Ulrik V. Moller. Our first mate, William Mueller, was of German descent. Charles Edward Slater, a full-blooded, full-bodied Englishman who held a captain's rating and had sailed as master of fourteen different ships under the flags of seven countries, was the TOLEDO'S second mate. Our third mate was Sigard Olaf Sampson, S.O.S. Hellum, or Siggy, as he was called.

I came to know Captain Moller and the mates better than the rest of the officers and crew. For their cabins and work, as well as mine, were confined to the ship's forward superstructure section. There, we saw, worked with and came to know one another on a daily basis over a period of several months.

Our ship also included its quota of engineers, oilmen, deckhands and cooks. Then, there was a man called "Pumps" who tended the TOLEDO'S loading and unloading; a ship's carpenter, "Chips," and a radio operator normally dubbed "Sparks," but in my case, "Sparklet." These men however, lived and for the most part worked, on the vessel's aft superstructure section, a place where except for meals, I considered strictly "off limits" for me.

The TOLEDO had two dining rooms, or galley as they are called aboard ships. One for the ship's officers including the engineers, and one for the crew on the deck below. So although I ate with the engineers, I rarely saw them except during meal times.

As for "Pumps" and "Chips," I saw them often working about the ship. "Pumps" was an abnormally shy individual who worked along the main deck opening and closing the tanker's multi-colored wheel controls for the input and output of our cargo. I don't ever recall seeing this man on the ship's forward compartment not hearing him speak an intelligible word.

He was a strange man in looks and manner. He was always disheveled in dress, his hair wild and bushy, his face largely concealed beneath his heavy black, bristling beard. He chewed tobacco incessantly so it seemed, and much too obvious. It funneled down along both sides of his mouth, onto his ill-kept beard and oil-covered shirtfront. His eyes were close-set, small and furtive; they never failed to sense my approach. I used to steel myself whenever meeting him was unavoidable.

(Continued on Page 20)

### EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE

We are reprinting the story published in SPARKS - III (1975) covering the life and experiences of Anne L. Smalley in this issue of SPARKS JOURNAL as new members have not received a copy and because it 'ties in' with the subject matter of this issue. Fortunately we received a news-clip from Member Barney Zweig who lives in EAST DENNIS, MA. UPDATING OUR STORY OF 1975 (THE FIRST ARTICLE) WHICH APPEARED RECENTLY IN THE CAPE COD ORACLE AND WAS WRITTEN BY ROBIN LORD. Thanks to both for permission to reprint.

We will have to observe for the record that Anne Smalley's claim to that of being "First woman Wireless Operator in the Merchant Marine" can not be sustained as Historian, Cmdr. Karl H. W. BAARSLAG has recorded (SOS TO THE RESCUE) Published in 1935 that in 1910 Miss Graynella Packer became the FIRST WOMAN MARINE OPERATOR in the U.S. There may have been others in other countries who may claim the honor but we do not have record of them. Miss Packer was followed in 1911 by Miss Tucker and Miss Coombs. No. 4 was Maybelle Kelso in 1912. These were all some 20 years before Anne Smalley. HOWEVER, it might well be said that few if any ships of U.S. registry were manned by women operators until WW-2 and Anne Smalley is truly a Pioneer in the sense she invaded a man's field and perhaps opened the gates to others of her sex to follow, which they certainly did with honor and dedication during and following WW-2.

William A. Breniman



By Anne L. Smalley Commander, USCGR

recent news article - "First Woman Accepted at Marine Academy" - caught, and holds my attention. For I went to sea some years back on an American merchant marine vessel, the 486-foot tanker, SS TOLEDO.

I did not hold a third mate's rating as this young woman will when her training is completed, but I had just completed an arduous federal engineering course, passed the required federal government examinations and held a second-class radiotelegraphy license with special endorsement for first-class radiotelephone.

My goal was to work in aviation communications, as an airport radio control tower operator, an air traffic controller at one of the Federal Aviation Authority airport control centers, or, with any luck, an airborne communications officer, hopefully, with one of the overseas airlines. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was further from my thoughts and plans than going to sea—on anything!

So how did this sea interlude come about? On an oil tanker? With 57 men? It's very simple, really. On all of the communication employment agency application forms, I signed my name using only the first two initials "A.L." and my surname. This, I did with intent, deliberately, because, as some may recall, it was not until the early 1970's that a woman knew she had any rights, let alone anything approaching equal.



# 'TANKER-TALES' SMALLEY



(Continued from Page 19)

In preparation, he would eject a mouthful of the brown, viscous-like fluid, swipe his arm across his mouth and, turning to leer sideways at me, would start nodding. When I bade him a good morning or afternoon, his jaw would snap open with the suddenness of a trap and he would emit the weirdest, maddening laughter I have ever heard outside that of a dramatic rendition. Quite truthfully, he frightened me. So where "Pumps" was concerned, there was never any conversation, opportunity or desire of wanting to know him.

Conversation with "Chips" too, was out of the question. For the poor man had but a stub of a tongue and could only grunt. "Uh," was his single monosyllabic utterance which, with varying body gestures, comprised his vocabulary and he had never learned to write.

Later, when I came to know Mr. Slater and Siggy, I was told that "Chips," during one of his voyages to the Orient, made the unforgivable, regrettable mistake of not first finding out if one of the young Chinese women he enfolded in his manly embrace was or was not married.

The TOLEDO'S principle cargo was, of course, crude oil. When "loaded to the gunnels" as Siggy would say, our tanks held 90,000 barrels. Occasionally, when we received orders to take on a load of raw sugarcane, our tanks would be washed before we came into harbor and when loaded, we would head seaward, our destination a refinery north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

At northern terminals our cargo was pumped out through a large flexible "umbilical" tubing which interconnected with and flowed through dockside pumping equipment and on into huge storage tanks along Boston, New York and Philadelphia waterfronts.

Our southern ports-of-call were Aransas Pass, Corpus Christi and Houston in Texas. Every now and again the TOLEDO would drop anchor in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Cuba in Caribbean waters and Venezuela on the northern coast of South America.

In both our routine northern and southern ports, our average shore leave was from 12 to 24 hours with a rare 48 hour stay when dockside equipment, or ours, faltered or failed to operate efficiently.

After a voyage or two I learned that tankers are like taxis, underway about 95% of their life tenure, or so it seemed to this confirmed landlubber suddenly turned sailor. With such constant shuttling it didn't take long for the monotony, the utter boredom of almost unending shipboard confinement to seep through.

Our voyages varied from 11, 15, 17 to 21 days at sea at a stretch. When it seemed to me that the TOLEDO just never would see land again, a narrow bluish haze or an arched glow of light against a black sky, would appear along the horizon and once more, I would be reassured we were not forever lost within that vast empty world of water and sky.

As we approached harbor, a scheduled tug, bearing our harbor pilot would appear off our portside. The TOLEDO'S engines would trim to slow, then idle. The tug would come alongside. The pilot would grab onto the overhanging rope-ladder. The tug would pull away and head for shore. The pilot, with his knowledge and skill of the in-land waterways would bring our big ship into port where the tugs we had requested would nuzzle close in against the TOLEDO'S deep hull, easing it in, carefully until it glided gently alongside its assigned pier.

Deckhands would scurry about the deck in a flurry of activities. A section of the portside railing would be removed. Several of the crew would release the well-tied gangplank, shove it across the main deck and position it securely at the railing's opening. Those of us who could go ashore in that port, including the TOLEDO'S radio officer, would line up, eager to get into town.

We shared taxis so that we could get into town faster, but once there, they went their way and I mine. I know not how they spent their shore leave, but as for me, my first ambition was to enjoy a superb meal with lots of milk and fruit, and then to buy more to take back aboard ship. Next, I'd get magazines, a book or two, see a movie, sit in a park, or just walk and walk for the sheer sensation of seeing people, trees, flowers, buildings, automobiles and feeling the good, solid earth beneath my feet.

But time, whether at sea or wherever, has a way of dissolving, faster when we're happy and occupied, and much, much slower when we are confined in a deadly day-in-day-out routine in an isolated environment and alone. For I would scarcely get my sealegs to behave as if they both truly were the same length on land when it would be time to head back to the TOLEDO, and, within an hour or two, we would be outbound, toward the open sea, for another 10 days to 3 weeks voyage.

As the ship's sole radio operator my hours were intermittently long, but of no great continuous, uninterrupted duration. This kind of an operation requires many short periods of watch-standing over a longer period of hours during a day.

Our out-going transmissions were not large in number. A daily noon position report to our New York office, arrival and departure messages, arrangements for harbor pilots, tugs and berthing accommodations. In-coming messages, with the exception of orders from our New York office, were mostly replies to our ship's out-going transmissions.



As with aircraft communications, ships route and receive their messages via radio through on-shore control centers called shore stations. These use landlines such as telephone and teletype to send their messages inland. Messages, originating on land, our New York office, for example, are wired into these shore stations which in turn broadcast "traffic lists" to the ships at sea. Their lists are transmitted at known, scheduled periods and, depending upon the position of your ship, the radio officer monitors the shore station nearest the ship.

Ship radio call signs are federally assigned. They consist of four letters. The first designates the flag and registry under which a ship operates. The first letters assigned to American vessels are "W," "D" and "K." The TOLEDO'S call sign was "WOCS."

So I was indeed momentarily taken back the first time I entered the radio control center and saw that the first letter of the TOLEDO'S call sign was "S". I wondered whether I was in fact on a Spanish vessel, the ship's vibrations had played havoc, or our previous radioman had a distorted sense of humor for the call sign read "SCOW."

Life at sea consists mainly of specified hours of work, food, sleep and relaxation. My watch-standing hours, like the mates, engineers, oilers, deckhands and so on, were specified. Food, and sleep—when the elements of sea and sky were moderate to gentle—were no problem.

But relaxing with my shipmates as the men did among themselves, posed a real problem. In this respect my life out there differed greatly from theirs. With the exception of meal times, I was alone 24 hours of the day, every day, for days following day; sometimes for 2 to 3 weeks at a time.

Off-duty time for them meant a game of cards, the shaking of dice, talk of politics, religion, the topics of the day. They were free to socialize, limited only by the length and breadth of the ship. They visited in the cabins of their shipmates, played banjos, harmonicas, and sang; I often heard them clearly when the winds were gentle. They drank beer on the aft deck on a warm evening. Sometimes, when there was too much of both, one of the mates would stroll back and quiet them.

But such periods of rest, relaxation and joviality, for me, were closed. As I saw my world out there, I had 2 strikes on me. One: I was female. Wherever I walked, sat, ate or slept amid that all-male setting I sensed I was "in-focus," so to speak; and a few men in particular made me keenly aware of it. Insofar as possible I kept my anatomy covered, loosely, wearing slacks, low-heel shoes, a sweater or jacket. No lipstick, make-up, earrings or other feminine trappings with which we adorn (or is it equip?) ourselves to attract and ensnare the opposite sex. Strike two, I was one of the TOLEDO'S officers and as such I had the responsibility to act like one at all times, under all conditions, and this, insofar as possible, I was determined to do.

From the moment I knew my first communication job was on board a ship and I made up my mind to take it, my goal was twofold, that of earning their respect and, where and how I could, their friendship.

Their relationship with me and mine with them, from the night I went on board had been courteous, distantly friendly. This decorum continued until the start of the TOLEDO'S third voyage when Captain Moller and I met along the flying bridge.

Perhaps I should explain that a tanker's flying bridge is a narrow, railed catwalk positioned some 6 feet above the main deck interconnecting their forward and aft superstructures. When the weather is foul and the main deck awash, this bridge becomes the only way of transitting the ship for food and watch-standing helmsmen to maintain their round-the-clock duty handling the ship's big wheel.

I have always remembered meeting Captain Moller that evening for several reasons. It was the beginning of one of the TOLEDO'S longest voyages, 21 days, and I was dreading the prospect of being alone and lonely for the next 3 weeks' incarceration; the very thought made me feel forlorn and depressed. To add to it, it was late Fall and Winter's first white chilling fingers were touching down across the north country. The sky was spitting icy sleet-pellets as the TOLEDO threaded its way through the channel's intricate labyrinths under the skillful guidance of our harbor pilot. The winds were already occasionally reaching Wagnerian heights.

And, off in the distance, the sea was showing its on-rushing white sabred tips. Too, I had come to live with the elements of sea and sky long enough to recognize that the storm brewing along the course the TOLEDO would assume had been forecasted to be one of some intensity. Not that I needed confirmation. For I had already come to grips with the sea's most cursed malady on 2 previous occasions and learned that an unsettled, churning sensation in my midriff was a most reliable indicator.

What I didn't know and, as it turned out was far better I didn't, was that the storm would continue to build and endure for the next 5 days and 4 nights without surcease; that, beginning late that night, Captain Moller, the chief engineer, and the TOLEDO'S radio officer would maintain on watch continuously for the next two days and nights with several hours into the third day.

It must be that I sensed some premonition of the struggle ahead. For as I left the galley late that afternoon and saw the harbor tug backing off and our pilot wave "bon voyage," I deeply wished that I, too, were on my way ashore.

Between the whipping winds and the ship's increasing Machivellian dance, I started forward along the flying bridge, my head down, concentrating on my footing, both hands alternately yawing and gripping along the railings. Suddenly I smacked solidly into a formidable barrier which promptly grunted back.

The impact knocked the breath out of me, driving me against the starboard railing. As I gasped for air I felt someone vigorously thumping me on the back. I looked up, and much to my embarrassment, saw that I had run into none other than the captain himself.

Through the skirling winds and intermittent boomings of spirited whitecaps slamming against the TOLEDO'S empty hull, he apologized.

He had been meaning, he said, to ask if I would care to join the officers' evenings when they came to his quarters to listen to the radio news. I said I would indeed and made it back to my cabin.

When my stomach seemed to have regained something of its normal equilibrium a few minutes before the scheduled Lowell Thomas news, I secured my cabin, climbed the starboard ladderway one deck, crossed portside, passed the radio "shack" and stopped in front of the captain's door. Hesitantly, I knocked.

The door opened and Captain Moller, his pet parrot "Ruffles," Mr. Slater and Siggy welcomed me in what, for me, was the start of a whole new world. A world of companionship, friendship and learning. A world which in the intervening years, in business, the military and my personal life, has served me well.

In retrospect a long, long time ago, I recognized those months on the TOLEDO gave me a rare, valuable and interesting interlude, an experience seldom granted to woman throughout history: that of sharing a man's world. Of working and living solely with and among men, strictly on their terms.

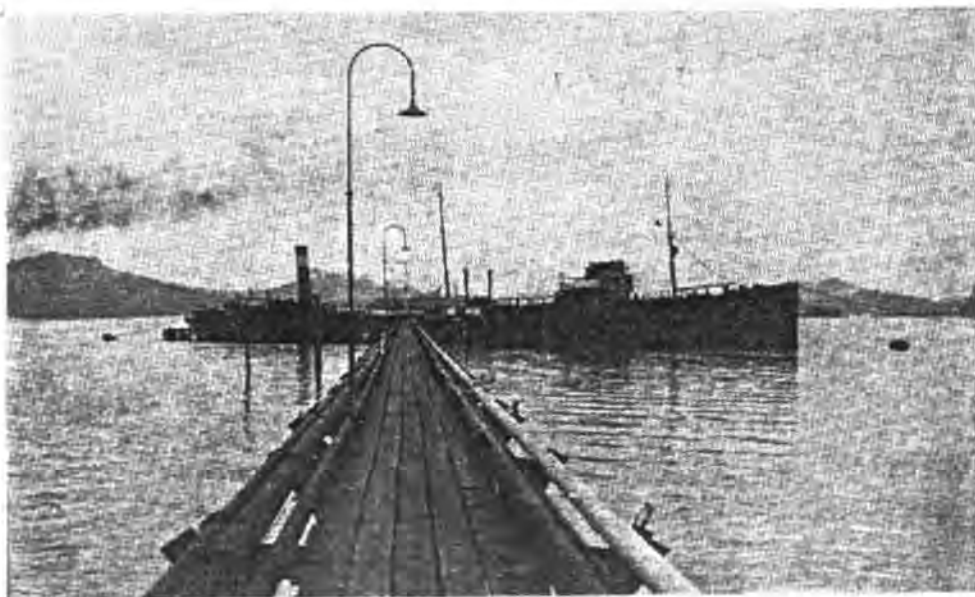
The sea is an isolated, unmitigating environment of solitude equalled only by remote mountain ranges, the Arctic, Antarctica and what few wildernesses remain in the world. Surroundings such as these do not provide a normal atmosphere for the kind of life most men want to live. Nor is loneliness acceptable to most men, or their families over a long span of years.

Life on the high seas, particularly on a merchant vessel, is a world fraught with innumerable, unpredictable hazards. Storm. Fire. Explosion. Shipwreck. Hardship. And, survival.

Too, the sea with its vast canopied sphere of constantly changing colors and formations is a realm of incomparable, indescribable beauty and wonder, of peace and quiet, of at-one-ment with one's own being.

That the sea was a challenge, and that I faced one, too, I recognized from the night I went on board until the morning I walked down the TOLEDO'S gangplank for the last time.

(Continued on Page 21)



SS "H. M. Flagler" at West India Oil Dock, Balboa, C. Z.

The Tanker, H.M. FLAGLER (WOCS) was home to many radio officers during her life from date of launching in 1918 at Newport News until she was retired from service, circa 1945. Included among the names of Radio men who served aboard her was that of member ANTON B. "ANDY" ANDERSON - 1566-V. The speed of the Flagler was 9.9 knots. She was single screw, 478 feet long and had a cargo capacity of 92,180 bbls. During her life, she was crewed by several nationalities. First by American, then in 1939 when sold to Panamanian interests, a Canadian crew took over. She reverted to an American crew in 1940 but in 1941 a Danish crew manned the ship. She missed being torpedoed in May 1943 north of Cape Farewell Greenland when a ship in the same convoy directly ahead went down in 45 seconds. She also sent out an "S O S" call in 1944 when in danger of foundering due to heavy weather. Her position at the time was 36° 10' N., Latitude, 72° 36' W. Longitude. She was badly 'down by the head' and the U.S. Navy responded to her call for help but she made New York under her own power. Thanks to member Anderson for the picture of the Flagler.



## ✓ CHECKING UP

LETTER FROM GEORGE E. FAVRE  
NOV. 27, 1981

Dear Bill:

A week ago Saturday on the Yankee Network NCS Earl Korf, K2IC, your good friend, in response to something I said mentioned that the next issue of Sparks Journal was to be about YL radio operators. I mentioned that I had had YL (WAC) radio operators on two of the Army hospital ships I had sailed on as CHOP in WW 2. Earl thought I should send the information in to you for inclusion in this issue so the girls could get credit for their stint as shipboard radio operators. I thought it was a good idea however after reflecting a bit I realized I did not have an awful lot of information to provide you about the girls other than the names of the ships I sailed on, plus one other I understand had the WACs and the names of five of the girls who sailed with me that I can remember. I have actually more knowledge about the ships in the fleet than about the girls.

The reason I have so little is that the WAC radio operator program started almost at the end of the war, and as I got a relatively early discharge after VJ Day, this covered a period of less than 6 months. And, I believe the fleet kept running a year or more after the war ended and of this I have no knowledge whatsoever.

I thought that being in the Washington Area it would be easy to get all the background information on the WAC radio operators from the various Historical Departments of the Services but this did not turn out to be so.

I spent the better part of last week on the phone to all the Historical Departments, the WACs, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy even the Navy Sealift Command (ex-MSTS which took over the Army Transportation Corps' big ships in 1948) but the only thing I was able to come up with is the enclosure, (\*) the Special Study on the WACs which gives a bit of information on the assignment of the WAC to the Hospital ships.

Another thing that complicates things a bit as I understand it is that the ships records of these particular ships were destroyed as a result of the Navy taking over the "Big" ships of the Army Transportation Corps. The Navy did not want the Hospital ships as they were mostly over age and not much value so did not want the records and the Army no longer having the ships did not want them either so they were disposed of. These were the ships' logs, rosters, etc.

It is possible there may be other Society members who sailed these ships and could provide further information especially that relative to records after JD Day. When the war ended in Europe (May 8, 1945), a few of the ships were scheduled for transfer to the Pacific including the one I was on, the Charles A. Stafford, which was the first of the ships to have the WACS.

They had started to come aboard in early March 1945, but my recollection is only one girl per trip, each replacing one of the GI's I had started with. These ships carried four operators and the girls replaced my three watch standers.

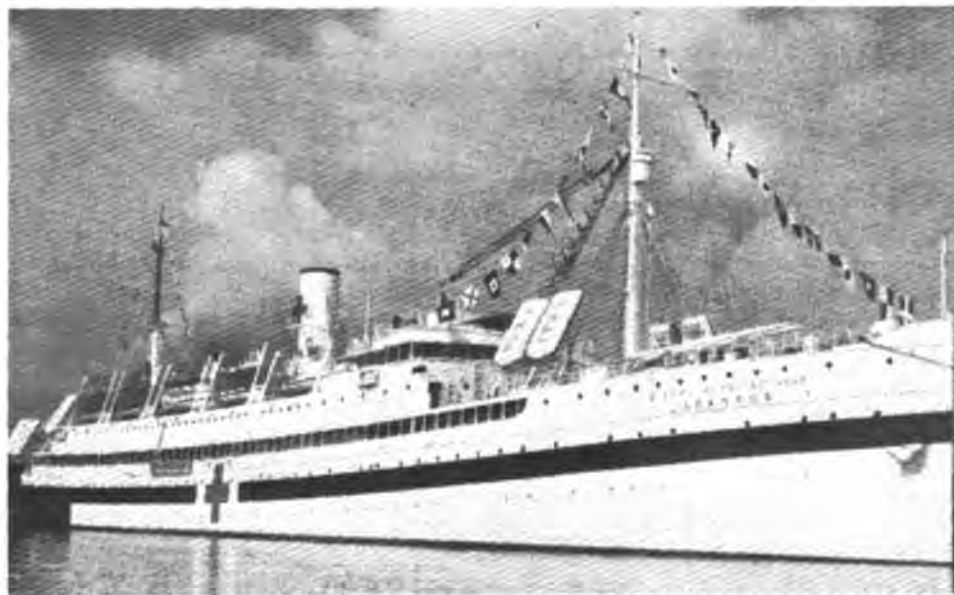
\*Pages 332-335 Special Studies - The Women's Army Corps by Mattie E. Treadwell from Office, Military History, Dept of the Army (Reprinted 1968)

(Continued on Page 22)



U.S. ARMY HOSPITAL SHIP "BLANCHE F. SIGMAN"  
CHARLESTON, S.C.  
Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps

U.S. ARMY HOSPITAL SHIPS "LARKSPUR"  
CHARLESTON, S.C.  
PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS.



You will notice in the WAC Special Studies report a footnote relative to a letter, SGTs Brown, Niles and CPL Kunmick. These were the girls assigned to the Stafford which incidentally was an old friend, having been the former S.S. Siboney of NY and Cuba Mail on the Havana-Mexico run and which I had sailed on twice before in the mid-thirties as a merchant marine operator.

As the girls did not come on board all at the same time they did not bunk next to the radio room at first but were quartered with the Nurses. Military protocol was pretty much observed. I remember Sgt Brown was Lillian and I think Niles was Katherine but I don't recall if I even know Kunmick's first name nor do I recall ever having been informed as to their home towns. After the three girls were on board they were given the quarters next to the shack and I bunked across the hall with a Jr. Officer.

I only made one trip with the three WACs as I got wind of the fact that the Stafford was to be transferred to the Pacific and managed to 'talk my way ashore' in Charleston. The trips I made on this ship were quick turnarounds, less than three weeks, Charleston to Liverpool. She made one more trip to Liverpool after I left for the Pacific. I had been relieved by my former first Assistant Joseph Ziemba, Endicott, NY.

After about a month or so on the beach in Charleston I was assigned to the Larkspur which had already had its complement of WACs although I don't know how long they had been aboard. The girls on this ship were Virginia Kidd of South Bend, Ind., and Pauline Sanborn of Bennington, Vt., and the first Asst., Lucy of Ottumwa, Iowa whose last name I just cannot remember.

I only made three trips on this ship to England and France as I had enough points to refuse overseas duty around Aug 15 when the point system went into effect just after the Japanese surrender. As I was within a few points of discharge I was transferred to WVP, NY to await discharge a couple of months later.

The other ship that I understand also had the WACS was the Blanche F. Sigman but I have no information at all as to the names, when assigned, nor how long they were on.

I am sorry this is all the information I can give you about the YL operators but perhaps someone else will come forth with additional bits and pieces or perhaps if this is included in the Sparks Journal it may come to the attention of some knowledgeable individuals.

I am including information about the ships which might be used to fill in the space -- with the WAC special studies report something might be put together.

I hope this can be of some help in the story of YL operators.

73

S/ George E. Favre 236-P W3PEV

### EDITOR'S NOTE -

Member George E. Favre, 236-P has spent considerable time checking military records in and about Washington DC. relating to the assignment of women operators during WW-2. We are publishing, not only his own article on material he was able to obtain but also his letter relating to his own experiences during WW2 plus portions of a Special Study made by Office of Military History, Dept. of the Army. Our thanks to Dr. Paul Scheips, DAMH-HDS, Center for Military History, Dept. Army for material furnished



# U.S. Army Transportation Corps Hospital Ships in W.W.-2

By -  
- GEORGE E. FAVRE  
236-P W3PEV

Among ships that have carried YL radio operators were several of the Army Hospital ships of WW-2. At least three of these ships had enlisted women from the Womens Army Corps (WAC's, as they were known). The Transportation Corps had a rather large fleet of "Mercy Ships", some twenty odd, and were used principally in the Atlantic Theatre but only two were in the Pacific as the Navy Hospital ships handled the Pacific until after 'VJ' Day when two thirds of the fleet were transferred to the Pacific.

The fleet consisted of a miscellany of pre-war coastwise passenger ships, a few converted Liberty ships, some old transports and a few captured ships. Among the former liners were the Algonquin and Seminole, ex-Clyde Mallory Line and the Acadia, Ex-Eastern SS Lines. These ships retaining their former names. Army hospital ships did not appear until the war was well under way, the Acadia being the first one in April 1943. Another former cruise ship the Munargo of Munson Line became the Thistle. The Ernest Hinds and the John L. Clem were former Merchant and Miners ships, the Hinds having been the Kent and the Clem a sister or similar ship. The Siboney of the Ward Lines Havana-Mexico run became the Charles A. Stafford and the first of the ships to carry the WAC radio operators.

The converted Liberties had such names as St. Olaf, Wisteria, Dogwood and Blanche F. Sigman, this ship being another of the ships that had the WACs.

The Chateau Thierry and St. Mihiel and later the Republic were among the pre-war army transports that were converted to hospital ships, and, of the captured ships one was the former WW 1 german Liner Breslau which prior to her hospital ship service had been the Navy auxiliary Bridgeport. This ship became the Larkspur as a hospital ship and was also one of the ships with the WACs. The former Italian liner Vulcania and the French Pasteur were converted and became the Ernestine Kiranda and the Aleda Lutz.

These ships were operated with civil service merchant crews except for the radio operators they being military probably for security reasons and to insure continued tenure. Additionally there was the medical staff, all military (12 doctors, 30 nurses, 65 medics), which varied somewhat according to the patient capacity, the ships carrying from 300 to 800 patients except the Republic, a late entry (Sept 45) which had a capacity of over 1200. This ship never sailed the Atlantic having gone directly to the Pacific after conversion.



U. S. HOSPITAL SHIP CHARLES A. STAFFORD  
ARRIVES AT PORT OF EMBARKATION  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

Photo by U. S. Army Signal Corps

The ships carried four radio operators although there was very little traffic before VE day except exchange of port arrival information and the ships did not broadcast their daily positions as the neutral ships did. After VE day, in the Atlantic there was some increase of traffic and radio silence was no longer strict.

The ships were painted white with a broad green stripe on the hull and red crosses prominently displayed and were fully lighted at night.

The ratings for the operators were CHOP - Tech SGT, 1st Asst., Staff Sgt and two SGTs although some of the individuals assigned to the ships started with lower ratings. The WACs sailed as Junior operators and there is no definite information that any ever sailed as CHOP.

After a few ships had gone into service, Charleston, S.C. became the home port for the ships -- this was in late 1943 -- and the trips were between Charleston and European ports. Occasionally a special assignment occurred, the Stafford in Dec. 1944 picked up wounded and ill German prisoners in New York and took them to Marseilles where an exchange of prisoners took place, the Stafford bringing back the exchanged ill and wounded American prisoners.

Two of the ships, the Hinds and the Clem were permanently based in the Italian theatre but were transferred to New York when Charleston was discontinued as debarkation port after VJ day, Sept 1945. At that time six other ships went to New York and the rest to the Pacific.

## THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS Special Studies

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, D. C., 1954

by

Mattie E. Treadwell



Toward the end of the war, the Transportation Corps also achieved its previously thwarted objective of employing Wacs on shipboard. Earlier WAC objections to placing five or six enlisted women and a WAC officer on shipboard were based on fears that the women would either require expensive special provisions or would have none, since they could not use the men's recreational and living areas. Late in 1944 the Transportation Corps again requested Wacs for such duty, stating that "an urgent need exists for radio technicians for troop and hospital ships."

WAC radio operators were by this time as scarce as male ones, and could not be provided by the Signal Corps, but the nature of the idea appealed to the Air Forces, which voluntarily furnished Wacs who merited reward for long and superior service in radio instruction in AAF schools. Three or four enlisted women and one WAC officer were assigned to each of several hospital ships, where they proved successful; one reported later, "It has been weeks since we have been referred to as experiments." With the success of the WAC radio operators, other Wacs came to be employed on shipboard as clerical workers and as medical technicians, to assist the nurses.

Quarters for such women did not prove a major problem, since they were usually housed in a cabin with its own toilet facilities, or with the nurses. As feared, the life proved confining and lacking in provisions for recreation for women. Enlisted women were not permitted to fraternize with passengers of either sex or with crew members

of the opposite sex. On hospital ships, women not on duty were allowed to visit with patients, which proved of some morale value to both. One Wac reported: "Most of them are anxious for a game of bridge or just talking... it makes us feel that our job is worth while if we have a small part in helping to bring them home safely."

Nevertheless, "hospital ship fatigue" often developed; commanding officers believed that two months' unbroken duty without shore leave should be the maximum, although some individuals were able to continue for a year or more without loss of efficiency. On other ships, where members were at sea only about ten days on each trip, with stopovers in foreign ports, the restrictions of shipboard life proved less important. The only reported casualties were two WAC officers who had to be reassigned for habitual seasickness.

The employment of WAC officers, originally requested only to secure approval of requisitions for enlisted women, soon proved so successful that WAC officers were assigned to other ships. Many such officers were graduates of the Army's School for Personnel Services, and were assigned as reconditioning officer, special services officer, and related duties. They were responsible for conducting discussions in the wards concerning veterans' benefits, hospital policy, and discharge procedure, for preparing a daily news sheet, for conducting the orchestra, and for arranging variety shows in the wards.



### A New Day

This is the beginning of a new day.  
I have been given this day to use as  
I will.  
I can waste it or use it for good.

WHAT I DO TODAY IS IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE I'M EXCHANGING  
A DAY OF MY LIFE FOR IT.

When tomorrow comes, this day will  
be gone forever, leaving in its place  
whatever I have traded for it.  
I pledge to myself that it shall be:

GAIN, NOT LOSS; GOOD, NOT  
EVIL; SUCCESS, NOT FAILURE  
in order that I shall not regret the  
price I paid for this day.





## HALIFAX—LAST STOP FOR NORTH ATLANTIC CONVOYS



Editor - SOWP Publications

Dear Sir:

I have been a member of SOWP for several years and enjoy very much your quarterly publication the "Sparks Journal".

As I indicated on my application for membership, I worked with the Navy in Halifax, Nova Scotia from May 1942 until June 1944 as a Canadian Government Radio Inspector and visited most of the ships arriving in port at that time to join convoys for the voyage across the Atlantic. This is where I met Sam Hakam and Bob Clough, and numerous other Radio Operators on board American ships including one of Ted McElroy's brothers mentioned in the latest issue of the Journal. I recall going on board one American merchant ship on a warm summers afternoon and found the Radio Officer struggling to keep two bottles of beer cool in a pan with several pieces of ice. He was awaiting my visit. His ship was on its second voyage to Murmansk, Russia, and he told me that during the previous voyage off the coast of Norway ships were being torpedoed all around them but they sailed through unscathed. Prior to that voyage we had had a bottle of beer together during my visit to his ship, and as he was rather superstitious, he wanted to do the same thing again in the hope it would again bring him luck. I certainly hope fate was kind to him the second time as I never saw him again.

During my two wartime years in Halifax, I visited a lot of interesting ships and met many interesting and friendly people. The Russian ships and equipment of that era were quite different from those of today. At that time they had C.W. transmitters in wooden lattice work cabinets operated by female radio officers. The Greeks were famous for their one quarter K.W. spark transmitters. These were replaced as more modern equipment became available.

Several accidents happened to the numerous ships that visited Halifax during those wartime years including two shipboard fires. One of these resulted in an SOS being transmitted within the harbor to obtain the services of a fireboat. The ship was heavily damaged and was beached on an island in the harbor. It was later refloated and towed to a U.S. shipyard for repairs. The other fire occurred on board a ship loaded with ammunition and was sunk at anchor with several shells fired into the engine room below the waterline by a naval minesweeper to prevent an explosion and damage to the city of Halifax and the then town of Dartmouth on the opposite side of the harbor, and to the numerous ships including one troopship in the harbor at that time.

Wishing continued success to your Society and publication, I remain

Yours Very Truly,

O.R. Mosher, 2210-P

### SMALLEY-SEA INTERLUDE

(Continued from Page 20)

Throughout the several months I was a member of that ship's complement, I made a concerted conscientious effort to live and to work among them as they had come to work and life before a woman had suddenly been thrust into their midst. This was their world. I was an invader.

I wanted no changes. No compromises. No adjustments. I neither sought nor asked for any. And, to the best of my knowledge, they gave none. They stood on their own feet. I made every effort to do the same. They did their work without asking my assistance. I strove to carry out the functions of my job in the same manner.

When an engineer had worked long and hard to win out over a storm, and came into the galley with a stubby unshaven beard, his hair uncombed, clothes soiled with the grease and oil of his work, looking and smelling as if he had slept on them as well as worked, which he undoubtedly had, I bade him the greeting of the day in a respectful tone and tended to my food.

When an off-color story was told as one of the engineer's had a way of doing on occasion when Captain Moller was not in the galley, I concentrated on eating, every now and then swallowing an unchewed, seemingly non-sinkable chunk which meandered down my gullet with all the ease of a golf ball oozing through thick, heavy mud.

When galley conversations whipped to a froth and swearing reached vigorous levels from a woman's point of view, my ears reddened and wriggled about a bit until I could get my feelings under control; but insofar as possible, I tried never to show any outward sign of displeasure or shock.

There were lighter moments, too. Moments during which I learned about the TOLEDO's operations, its navigational equipments and functions.

Mr. Slater and Siggy taught me how a ship finds its way from harbor to harbor. The use of a ship's instruments. The polaris, sextant, chronometer, parallel slide rule, books and charts.

Under their supervision I learned to plot our noon-day position, compute and carry out the necessary changes in the ship's changes of course, routes and destinations.

With their guidance—and Captain Moller's permission—they trained me to steer the TOLEDO's big wheel. And I spent many a long hour both in daylight and darkness watching the ship's binnacle compass, turning the helm from port to starboard, starboard to port, back and forth, over and over again. Nothing I have done before or since, except fly a small aircraft under moonlight, has ever given me such a complete feeling of freedom and exhilaration or held me spellbound in the sense of majestic wonder and beauty as steering the TOLEDO through a pathway of golden sea lighted by the reflective brilliance of millions and millions of endless chip diamonds. There were moments out there when it was truly a beautiful world, a fairyland indeed.

Mr. Slater and Siggy taught me to recognize and understand the various interactions between the elements of wind, sky and sea. The varying clouds, their layers, movements and formations and how to foretell weather which controlled our course, our ride and our destinies. When the night sky was emblazoned with myriads of yellowish planets and twinkling stars, they took the time and interest to show me the location of the North Pole . . . Orion's Belt . . . Venus . . . Jupiter . . . the Milky Way . . . Taurus, the Bull . . .

Through their eyes and their love of the sea I came to feel the miracle and magic of a sun's rising up from out of the sea, its steady, inalterable climb toward the noonday zenith; its westward drift, measurable and predictable, and its gradual decline along the horizon and its absorption and final disappearance back into the sea from which it had emerged.

Whenever there was a bright moonlight night, the weather was warm and either Mr. Slater or Siggy had the bridge room watch, I would go topside and spend the night on a folding cot Siggy had resurrected from somewhere within the TOLEDO's holds. There, surrounded by the small deck's canvass encircling sides, with both port and starboard ladders constantly guarded by my trusted friends, I would lay awake as long as I could watching the heavenly array above, the moon's graduating pathway from a pinpoint of light on the horizon to a broad spectrum of gold outlining the TOLEDO's long, black hull and its jutting white superstructures. It was fascinating to see the constant change of light and shadow as the ship rocked rhythmically in a deep sea's undulating peaks and valleys. To see the tiny masthead light trace a pathway against the darkness of the sky. There, the flying bridge, the light and shadow effects over the black main deck and the quiet eeriness of the ship itself interchanged with the repetitive motion of a clock's pendulum swinging slowly, rhythmically from side to side. The memory of such nights remain as a thing of joy and delight I have never forgotten.

With the morning there were ropes to be spliced, knots which must be learned and tied, the repair of a rope-ladder, the sewing of a piece of canvass or flag signals which the wind's intensity had whipped loose.

During the dark of night I came to know the creakings of a ship, its moans and groans as metal against metal or wood rubs with the churning and pitching of a ship. The ghostlike, haunting slap of ropes against a masthead. The reverberation of tons of sea belting its might against the TOLEDO's hull. The shrill, piercing whistle and screech of winds packing their forces into crevices, corners and seams. The sheen of rain pelting against the thick glass of a porthold, striking against the bridge room windows and drenching you the moment to go outside. The silent swirl of dense snowflakes gentling down over a ship like noiseless white bullets intent on battering through the TOLEDO's thick steel deckplates; and at times so dense it seemed as if our ship were enclosed within an ornamental glass paperweight vigorously shaken.

I came to know the chilling touch of a thick, heavy fog on my face. How it penetrates deep inside to the very marrow of your bones, making you cold, shivering and shrivelled whether you are in your bunk, regardless of how many clothes you put on to warm your body. How everything is damp, wet, soggy to your every touch.

I came to know what it means to stick at your job out there through howling, blustering weather. What it feels like to know your ship has suffered damage, that the life of everyone on board, including your own, can depend upon your ability to keep going, to keep the ship's only link for help operative.

With the passing of several months I realized that although there was much about my job I enjoyed, it was not the kind of life I wanted to live for years on end. So, for professional and personal reasons as well, I made the decision to leave the TOLEDO.

Finally, the day came when I was happy to see the big ship enter what, for me, would be a final docking. But I have also to admit I felt a sense of sadness at the prospect of leaving the TOLEDO.

I watched our down harbor voyage through the radio room's porthold until the ship was secured at the Cities Service refinery dock in Quincy, Massachusetts, locked the radio "shack" for the last time, picked up my suitcase from my cabin and, taking a last look, went outside.

The TOLEDO's deckhands were shoving the ramp across the deck. The guard railing was removed and the gangplank lowered to the dock and secured. Knowing that the bulk of the men were always eager to go ashore, I waited until they left. Suitcase in hand, I walked down the starboard ladderway and onto the main deck.

When I neared the gangplank, I was surprised to see "Chips" converging there too. As I neared the entrance I noted that he was holding one hand behind his back. He stopped, withdrew his arm from be-

hind him and held out a pair of hand-hewn sandals with a canvass strap across their insteps. "Uh," he grunted in his best English moving them toward me.

"They're lovely, Chips," I told him. "Thank you."

With the words "they're lovely," his shoulders straightened, his eyes brightened and he smiled. In all the months I had been on board I had never seen or known "Chips" to stand as tall or look as happy.

Once down the gangplank onto the dock and walking alongside the TOLEDO's portside, I had a strange feeling I was forgetting something. Something that belonged to me, something I treasured, seemed to be back there on the ship.

I had packed carefully, checking and re-checking the radio and auxiliary rooms, the bridge, chart room and topside, for I knew I would not ever be coming this way again. Since there were only two places in my cabin for keeping my belongings, a 3-drawer chest and a few pegs along the aft bulkhead for handling clothes, I knew I had not left anything there. So, what could it be? I had not left anything, anything tangible, that is.

Reassured, I went on. But I kept wanting to turn back. The thought persisted. Beyond that curve in the road ahead, I would catch a bus and thus begin my return to live and work in the so-called civilized world.

Just before the turn in the road, my feet moved more reluctantly with each step. Unable to continue, I stopped and looked back. Captain Moller was standing out on the portside bridge wing. He took his cap off, raised it over his head and waved it back and forth, slowly. I waved back—and walked on.

In the months following my departure from the TOLEDO I often scanned the daily newspaper's shipping news column for information as to the ship's operations and whereabouts.

Then, in World War II, as an Air and Sea Rescue Controller with our sea-going branch of the military, a report of the TOLEDO's torpedoing and sinking in the Gulf of Mexico, came across my desk.

I tried several times to read the report. But, for me, the print always blurred. I was never able to read it through.

Yes, this recent news article concerning the first acceptance of one of our young women by a marine academy interests me. For, if you were to ask whether she and others of our sex can hope to find a life working and living on the high seas, my answer is they can, without question.

I have to admit that when I first started going to sea and an entire crew of Russian women, with the exception of the captain, pulled in alongside the TOLEDO, my eyes bugged-out noticeably. But after living with an all-male crew for many months, I am convinced that our American women can do as well—maybe even better than the Russians.

After all, what do they have that our women don't? Communism? We have freedom! Freedom to work and live how and where we choose, with equal pay, promotion and advancement—possibly, some day, even to the rank of captain?



Thanks to SWP Member Albert L. Woody 539-P (W7WQ) for obtaining the story of Mrs. Anne L. Smalley. We think all of our members will enjoy "Sea Interlude"





MY STORY OF LIFE AND EXPERIENCES AS A WIRELESS OPERATOR

IN THE U.S.N. ON NORTH ATLANTIC TROOP-SHIPS DURING WORLD-WAR ONE

BY RAYMOND W. ZERBE



RAY ZERBE'S LOG  
An Amazing WW.1 Record of  
Radio on Atlantic Troop Convoys

I served in the radio gang on the USS Pennsylvania (1916) Atlantic Fleet Flagship C in C Atlantic Fleet.

I was transferred to the USS Arkansas, Flagship of the 7th Division of Battleships at Guantanamo, Cuba, and was on her when war was declared April 6, 1917.

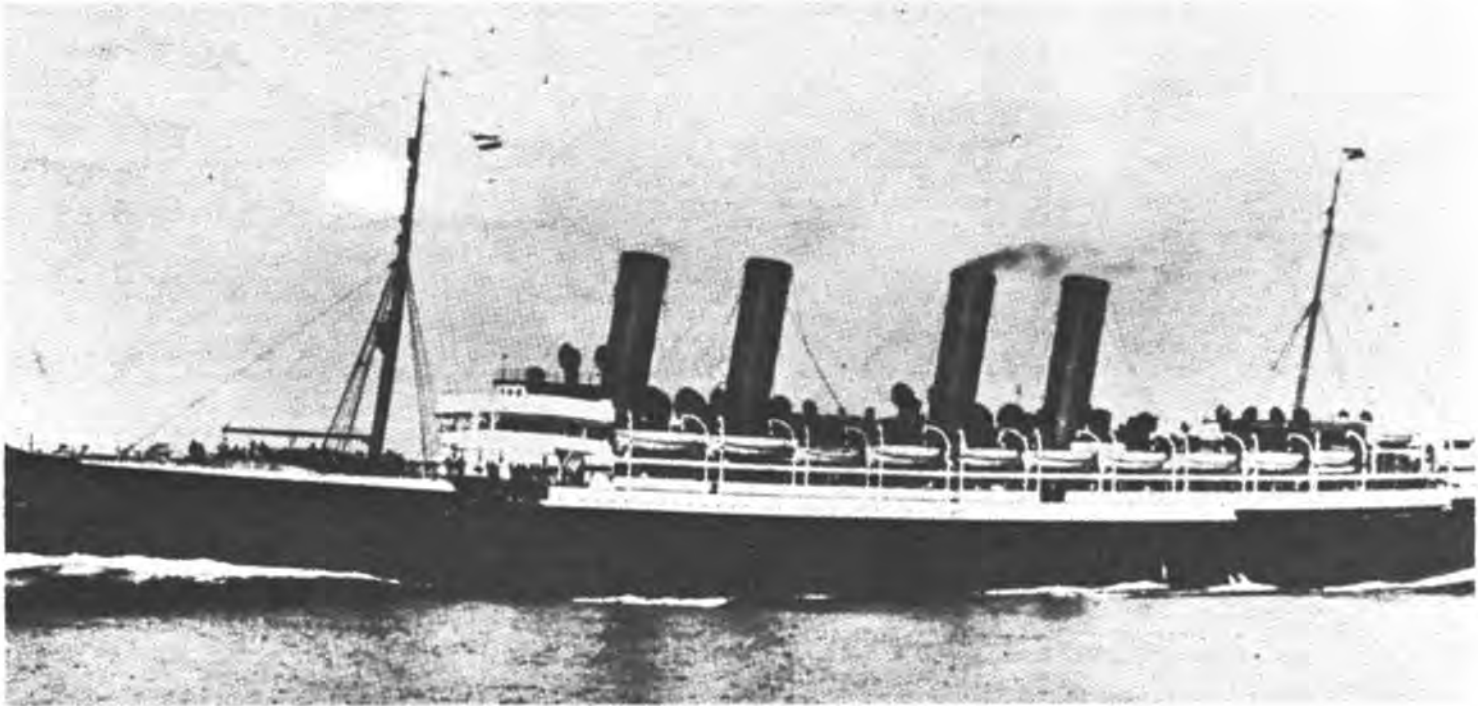
On August 18, 1917, I was detached from the USS Arkansas and transferred to the ex-North German Lloyd liner Kronprinz Wilhelm in Philadelphia Navy Yard. It had been taken into the U.S. Navy and renamed the USS Von Steuben. We lived in tents on the dock while fitting out the ship, arming it with eight five-inch guns, three four-inch guns, and two anti-aircraft guns. The Navy Yard and an old-time Chief Electrician Radio, who had just learned the code and been assigned as radioman, another Third Class Operator and I installed a 5 KW Lowenstein Spark Transmitter, quenched and rotary gap, and an old Marconi crystal receiver. I believe it was 106-D Model with no amplifier or tube detector.

The Kronprinz Wilhelm had quite an interesting career under the German Flag. It was one of the several German passenger ships the U.S. Navy took over when we declared war on Germany.

The Kronprinz Wilhelm, a North German Lloyd liner, arrived in New York on her maiden voyage on September 25, 1901, after being hit by a tidal wave in mid-Atlantic. She was at that time considered the fastest ship on the Atlantic, and was called "The Queen of the Atlantic." In 1907 she hit an iceberg and, but for watertight compartments, would have sunk as she suffered a tremendous gash in her side and took on much water.

The ship was a coal burner, twin screws, reciprocating steam engines and could make up to 25 knots with all boilers fired up. It was 600 feet long and displaced 15,000 tons.

The start of WWI between the Germans, British, French and allies in 1914 caught her in mid-Atlantic. She immediately dashed for New York and docked at the North German Lloyd docks in Hoboken. As we were not in the war we interned the vessel but left the crew aboard. After a couple months she got up steam and slipped to sea at night without benefit of tugs, or clearance from our authorities. She met a German cruiser at sea which transferred a 3" field piece to her deck and she started on a raiding spree. Up until April 15, 1915, she had sunk 16 vessels. taking all coal and supplies from them and putting the crews ashore on islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. On that date some British cruisers boxed her in off Newport News, Virginia, and she ran into port at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Two British cruisers came into the Roads and anchored close by her. Just before the 24 hours were up when they would all be interned by the U.S., the cruisers got their hooks and stood off the Virginia Capes just outside the three-mile limit. The Kronprinz Wilhelm also got up her hook and stood out to sea, but when she got outside she saw she had no chance to get away so she came back into port at Norfolk, and the U.S. put her in the Navy Yard and took her two screws off, but left the crew aboard. Next thing the Navy knew, she had hollowed out some channels in her wooden masts, placed wires in them for an antenna and started working German cruisers from the Navy Yard. So now they took the crew off and in-



S.S. KRONPRINZ WILHELM - DKP  
Former NGL Liner KRONPRINZ WILHELM — DKP. Commissioned 1901. 663 Ft. Long, 66-beam; 43-depth. Speed 22.75 Normal. Seized by U.S. April 1917. Renamed USS VON STEUBEN — NACC. Scrapped 1923.



turned them shoreside in barracks. Six German officers and six enlisted men escaped from the internment, wound up in San Diego. They purchased the steam yacht Eclipse and went to sea as a raider in the Pacific. It was reported that the Australian cruiser Sydney sank the Eclipse on October 20th.

Before the crew was removed from the Kronprinz Wilhelm, they busied themselves putting sand in the cylinders and steam lines of the Kronprinz Wilhelm. After we got into the war the ship was towed to Philadelphia where I joined it and the engineers cleaned sand out all lines and cylinders and no damage was done. After being fitted out with all the necessary equipment, guns, fire control, 1,200 crew members, a Chief Radioman, one other 3rd Class Radioman and myself, we loaded 4,500 Marines aboard and sailed to Hoboken, then on to sea on October 31, 1917 in company with the USS Agamemnon, USS Mt. Vernon, both four-stackers, ex-North German Lloyd liners, and the USS George Washington, a two-stacker and also an ex-North German Lloyd liner. We had as Ocean Escort the armored cruiser North Carolina to help protect us from German cruisers that were at sea in the North Atlantic.. Destination, Brest, France. We were designated as a cruiser-transport.

We had an uneventful trip until on November 9, 1917, I was on the 4 to 8 P.M. watch when close to 8 P.M., all of a sudden there was a tremendous crash and we listed heavily to port and I was thrown from the chair to the deck. I got up, started up the motor generator, and about that time the whistle on the voice tube blew, and someone said, "Send out the warning. We are torpedoed." As I didn't have any position, latitude and longitude, and we were in convoy, I just sent out a signal "IHA", I believe it was, that meant "We have met the enemy." I then sent the striker on watch to the bridge to see if they wanted a regular SOS sent and to get our position if they did. He came back and said that we had been in collision and that the Captain wanted to see me, so after being relieved I hied myself to the bridge, knowing fireworks were due. The Captain wanted to know what I had sent and who authorized it. After explaining the details he asked the Quartermaster at the wheel if he knew who had used the voice tube to the radio room. He said it was an officer but couldn't tell in the dark who it was. The Skipper, Stanford E. Moses, figured out who had been on the Port Wing of the bridge during the collision and properly dressed him down, and told me to resume my duties.

We had all our lifeboats, before the collision, lowered to the promenade deck, lashed out on strong backs ready for launching "just in case." This was the second convoy carrying troops and they weren't taking any chances. The collision crushed all the lifeboats on that side of the ship, knocked two 5" rifles off their carriages and two 3" rifles off the mounts and sheared quite a bit of the bow 90 degrees to the port side.

The other ships scattered on my signal except the USS Agamemnon that we had collided with. We laid to the rest of the night with our lights all on, and made necessary

(Continued on Page 26)

# Editorial Note

The ranks of those who fought in World War One are thinning and time is taking its toll of the valiant individuals who served in the war... "To Save Democracy".

There are many 'unsung heroes' of WW-I who didn't receive proper recognition for their wonderful contributions and service to their country. The author of this article — Mr. Raymond W. Zerbe — was assigned to many sensitive key assignments throughout the war on some of the great transports that took 'our boys' to Europe. Thousands upon thousands of lives were at stake and in jeopardy of the "Wolf Packs" of the German submarines during the crossings of these carriers.

The Germans had turned their "U-Boats" loose on the North Atlantic bringing havoc and fear throughout the Allied Shipping World. Mr. Zerbe was to send the fateful "ALLO" call many times ... reporting the sighting of a German sub. The dreadful sighting of a torpedo-wake coming directly toward Zerbe's ship was experienced on a number of occasions. By skillful navigational maneuvers and alert lookouts, the torpedoes missed their marks. Perhaps there was a watchful eye from above.

Ray Zerbe's first assignment was aboard the USS PENNSYLVANIA - NCE in November 1916. He also served on the USS ARKANSAS - NBV and then assigned to the USS VON STEUBEN - NACC — the former passenger liner Kronprinz Wilhelm - DKP. This North German Lloyd Liner broke the speed-holder of the North Atlantic — The Hamburg American Liner Deutschland's record in Sept. 1902 winning the coveted 'BLUE RIBBON'. The record crossing from Cherbourg to Sandy Hook took 5 days 11 hours and 57 minutes with speed of 23.09 knots. The Kronprinz Wilhelm was fitted out as an armed raider during WW-1 and began her career in July 1914 as a commerce raider. During this time, she sank 26 vessels mostly in the South Atlantic after steaming over 37,000 miles. She was seized by the U.S. Government in 1917 and renamed the U.S.S. VON STEUBEN.

The ship names STEUBEN and VON STEUBEN are frequently confused. It might be noted for the record that the USS VON STEUBEN - NACC was the former German Passenger Lines KRON-PRINZ WILHELM - DKP whereas the "STEUBEN" was launched as the "MUNCHEN" in 1923 (after the war). She was renamed the GENERAL VON STEUBEN in 1931 after conversion to oil and carried this name until 1939 when the name was shortened to "STEUBEN" due to the fact that the General she was named for had defected from the German war machine and in disfavor. The STEUBEN was sunk by a Russian submarine on Feb. 10, 1945 (WW-II) with perhaps the greatest loss of life in maritime history.

The USS VON STEUBEN was the sister ship of the former German Liner KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE which was scuttled in 1914 on the Coast of Africa near Rio de Oro after a short career as a raider. She was damaged by gunfire from the British cruiser "HIGHFLYER". This ship is note-worthy historically as it was THE FIRST TO CARRY WIRELESS. The transmitter had a range of about 25 miles. The KAISER WILHELM DE GROSSE was also the first ship to be fitted with REMOTE CONTROLLED WATERTIGHT DOORS.

Ray Zerbe's experience was one of continuing drama sprinkled with action almost daily on the troop carriers. Assignments on the North Atlantic included two on the VON STEUBEN and twice on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON - NEC for long periods plus other navy craft.

Highlight of his assignment on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON was being selected as one of the elite team of wireless men for President Wilson and his staff when they crossed the Atlantic for the Peace Conference. He was also honored by being named Chief when the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON carried King Albert and Queen Elizabeth home from their visit to the United States.

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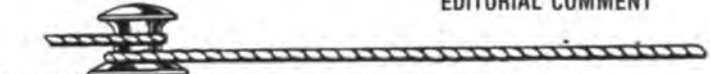


RAYMOND W. ZERBE — AUTHOR  
Picture taken at Edinburg, Scotland, March 30, 1920 while Chief on USN Destroyer USS BALLARD - NIGN.





EDITORIAL COMMENT



(Continued from Page 25)

One of Ray Zerbe's greatest thrills however came when he met the Commander of the "U" Boat that fired two torpedoes at the Northern Pacific - NKI and the VON STEUBEN on May 1, 1918. The meeting occurred while Mr. Zerbe was attending an informal gathering of Allied and German officers and officials. On this occasion Ray had the opportunity of congratulating the commander ON HIS POOR MARKSMANSHIP!!!

Following WW-I, Ray Zerbe spent several years as Radio Officer posted on West Coast ships. Charlie Lindh, the popular Manager of I.W.T. hired Zerbe as MRI for IWT at San Francisco. There he remained until RCA bought out IWT (Jan. 1, 1928) when he moved to RMCA as Inspector. Later as Manager, he hired many radio men over the years until the Radio Operator Union took over this duty. Ray retired in 1950 following a heart attack.

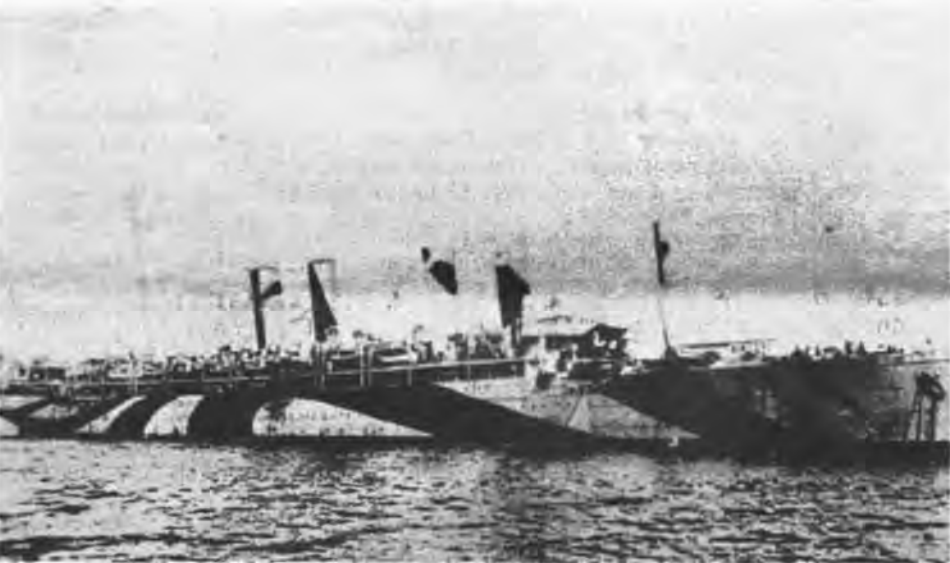
I think you will enjoy reading the "LOG" kept by Ray Zerbe. Old Timers who went to sea during WW-I will find it extremely interesting. This may also be interest to the men who fought in WW-I and were transported by these great ships.

While it is said "Everything is relative", I think of the great differences that existed between WW-I and that of WW-II; The Korean War and the infamous experience in Viet Nam. First, our equipment was primitive compared with later standards. Most of our "CW" work was on either intermediate or long-wave frequencies in limited frequency bands. The Short, VHF, UHF and other sophisticated equipment and frequency used had not yet been developed; hence men were called upon to exercise greater ingenuity and in many cases endured far greater hardships than in later wars. There were, for example, no helicopters to pick up survivors of accidents. Many navigational aids such as Radar, Loran and DF equipment had not been perfected to the point it could be depended upon.

The "Log" kept by Raymond Zerbe brings us a 'flash back' of an era when the security of the United States and our Allies was in serious jeopardy. It was a proving ground for all types of equipment including the first large scale use of the WIRELESS or radio as it became known. He and other veterans of WW-I volunteered their services and their lives, if need be, for the security of their country and its people. We have a proud heritage in our background that sparkles with accounts of heroic deeds and devotion to duty under almost impossible conditions.

This article honors one of the gallant members of our fraternity who deserves the accolade of historic recognition, even if long delayed. A salute to SOWP Member Raymond W. Zerbe and thanks from the Society and its members for his distinguished service in the field on the WIRELESS.

William A. Breniman — Editor



U.S.S. VON STEUBEN - NACC  
"Uniform of the Day". The camouflage dress worn war service on the Western Ocean.

RAY ZERBE'S LOG

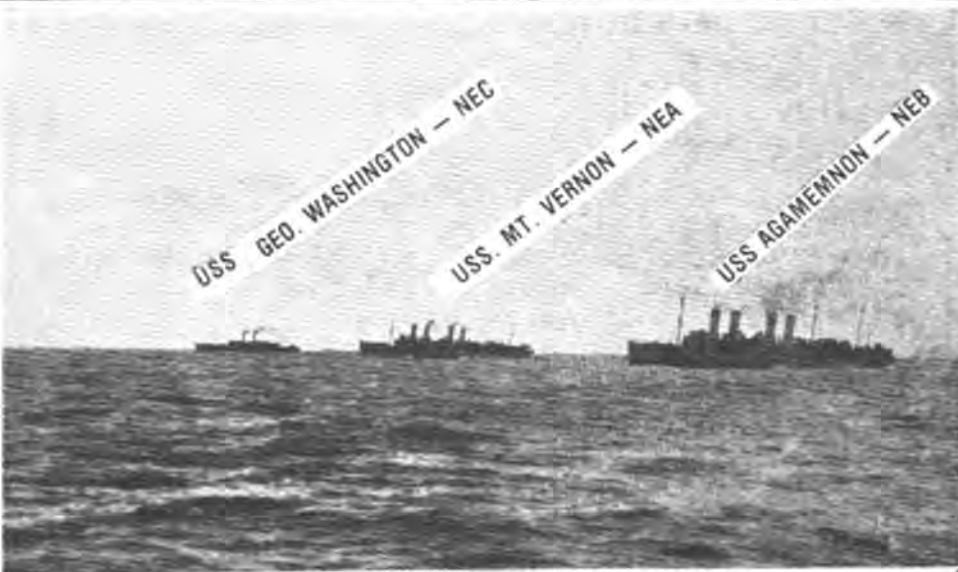
collision repairs. We were only about 500 miles off the French coast and German U-boats were very active in the vicinity. Next morning we got under way and found the rest of the troop ships and the cruiser that was our ocean escort. Later in the afternoon at 4 P.M. we met an escort of ten destroyers to take us into Brest, France.

About 10:30 P.M. lookouts reported two torpedoes headed for ship. Captain reversed both engines and torpedoes passed ahead of us. We fired one 5" gun and several destroyers searched area but found nothing and dropped no depth mines.

Morning of November 12, 1917, woke up to find destroyers had formed two columns and were laying intense smoke screens and we were steaming between the smoke screens.

Received ALLO messages (submarine position reports) showing several subs reported in our vicinity the evening before, also bridge reported that one of the lookouts had sighted the sub that fired the two torpedoes at our convoy.

We arrived in Brest harbor shortly after noon time the same day. Port forces cut our bow away, and filled forward compartment with a concrete barrier to hold back sea pressure as we steamed for home.



FIRST CONVOY OF FOUR GREAT LINERS — MAKING THEIR FIRST TRIP IN OCT. 1917. This picture was taken from deck of U. S. S. Von Steuben. Photo from Raymond Zerbe Collection

Imagine you will be interested to know that the writer kept an accurate personal log during all the war period and until the end of his enlistment July 10, 1920. Otherwise his 86 1/2 years would probably have dulled his memory of events and dates during the 62 years that have elapsed since they occurred.

We left Brest after dark November 28th after temporary repairs, escorted by two destroyers, one of which broke down shortly after we were at sea. While waiting for it to get underway, I received an SOS SSS from the S/S Texas which was close by. My brother's ship, the USS Harvard, an armed yacht (not the passenger ship Harvard) was on patrol duty outside the harbor at Brest at the time and went to the rescue. The destroyers left us on the morning of November 30th and went to pick up an incoming convoy. That evening I heard an enemy sub working code groups close aboard. Notified bridge and we lit off more boilers and put on more speed. Naturally all guns were loaded and gun crews standing by all the time we were in the war zone, which only extended about a thousand miles off the French and English coasts at that time.

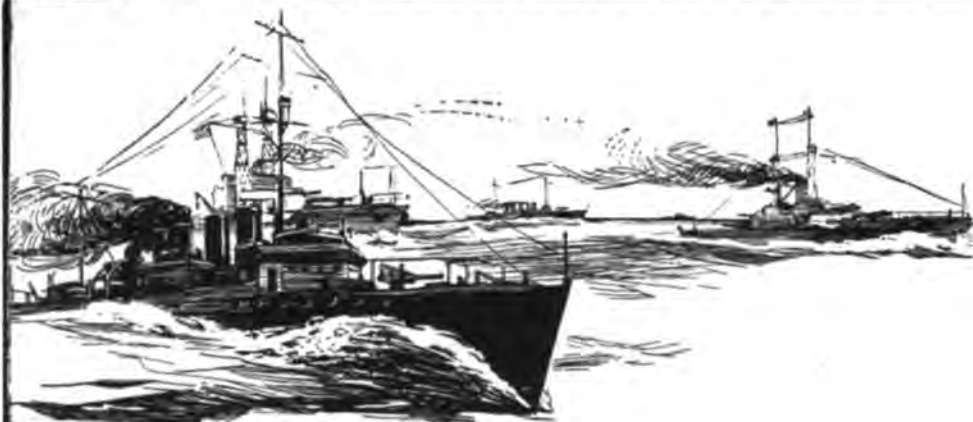
We had an uneventful trip until December 6, 1917, when we were about 40 miles off Halifax, N.S. when we heard an explosion at 9:10 A.M., ships time, and then the lookouts reported a column of smoke ahead. We were headed for Halifax to take on some bunker coal. We didn't know what had happened, so the Captain ordered General Quarters and we proceeded on in. No pilot boat outside so headed in and were stopped by a launch which megaphoned over that we should go astern as we were in the mine fields. We then followed launch through safe passage ways to our anchorage, and found out that a Belgian Relief ship had been in collision with a French ammunition ship which caused a fire, causing it later to explode, wrecking the city, blowing ships' masts off, sending one ship high and dry on the shore. All communications from the city were destroyed, and Chief of Police estimated 2,000 men, women, and children were killed. I believe it was reported later that the actual count was around 1,300. It was lucky that school had not yet begun or more would have been killed, as several schools were among the buildings destroyed. The city was placed under martial law and we sent armed sailers ashore to help stop possible looting. The city authorities brought messages out for us to send to Boston asking for doctors, nurses and relief trains. We couldn't raise Boston, too far for our spark transmitter in daylight, but finally got a station at Bar Harbor, Maine, and we worked it for a couple days and nights with urgent messages.

That night right after dark a high wind broke a small steamer loose from its anchorage and it drifted into our port side, wrecking two boats that we had in the water moored to the boat boom, and causing a near panic from our sailers who were at evening meal, and had been ashore all afternoon rescuing survivors from wrecked buildings. After taking on coal, we sailed for Philadelphia on December 10th, arriving at Philadelphia December 13, 1917, thus ending our first overseas trip. We immediately coaled ship, took on 1,200 new Marines and sailed for sea on December 20th. After we got well to sea, we turned south and disembarked Marines at Guantanamo, Cuba, for further training and station duty. We then went to Balboa, Canal Zone, and entered the navy drydocks there to have a new bow installed. I was rated Electrician Radio 2nd Class on January 1, 1918. After new bow was installed we sailed January 19, 1918 for Newport News, Virginia, to coal ship, leaving there January 31st.

(Continued on Page 27)







(Continued from Page 26)

Sailed from New York on Feb. 10, 1918 for France. Uneventful trip except Armoured Cruiser Pueblo guarding right flank of convoy, thought she saw a periscope between her and the Von Steuben. Opened up with a heavy gun (solid ammunition). The shell ricocheted and passed just over our ship. (Scary!) Received several SOS from ships being shelled and torpedoed. February 22nd, after a long, slow crossing we were met and escorted by eight U.S. destroyers. Next day the convoy split, part going to another French port and we proceeded to Brest. On February 24th, our escorting destroyers received word that a German submarine had spotted our convoy and notified other submarines. We maneuvered by radio balance of night until daylight when we came under attack just about two miles outside entrance to Brest harbor. Destroyers did a good job protecting our convoy and we entered harbor safely, after airplanes came out to help ward off attack. Not a soldier lost.

On February 25th my brother Howard, a radio operator, came into port escorting a slow freighter convoy and waved at me as he came abreast of the Von Steuben en route to the Yacht Basin. He and another radioman from the U.S.S. Harvard came aboard that night in a party to attend a minstrel show our crew gave.

March 1, 1918. At 4:30 P.M. we sailed for sea with destroyer escort. Received SOS from S.S. Hiram B. Everett being chased and shelled by submarine, fifty shots fired by sub, wounding one man. Destroyer Reid went to rescue. March 2nd Destroyers Flusser, Monaghan and Roe left us at 8 P.M. to join another convoy and escort it back to Brest. We left Transport Martha Washington and increased our speed and headed for New York. On March 4th we came upon a small craft wallowing in a heavy seaway. We signalled asking if it needed help. They said no but wanted our position, latitude and longitude. March 5th at 4:30 P.M. General Quarters was sounded. I went out to see what we were firing at. Object looked like periscope at 2,000 yards. Our 5" guns were firing shrapnel shells that exploded on contact. Ship was rolling badly and four of the 5" guns and two 3" guns on port side were in action. We were turning away from target when 5" gun on port well deck fired and apparently the shell hit a wave as it got about on port beam. Shrapnel disembowelled two of gun crew on one midship 3" gun killing them instantly. I was standing almost directly above this gun on boat deck outside the radio room. Shell fragments wounded one of ship's officers on searchlight platform just above, and forward of where I stood. Another fragment tore a big hole in Number 3 smokestack. Ten persons wounded and one died couple days later. Next shot hit the target and it was no more. Next day a "Court of Inquiry" was held to determine cause of premature explosion. Several shells fired from fantail 5" guns to see if shells would prematurely explode in the air without contacting surface of sea.

March 10th. At 8:40 P.M. some ship started sending SOS saying it had a violent explosion, about 200 miles astern of us. S.S. Bergensfjord called and wanted to know if anyone else in vicinity had the position so he could confirm as the SOS ship's antenna was probably grounding. I gave him the position I copied and he said they were headed for it. Next morning on the 11th they sent us a message saying they had searched the area but could find no wreckage or lifeboats. It was a very rough sea when the SOS was sent and doubt if they could have launched boats, if they had time. March 12th. We dropped the hook off St. Johns, Bermuda and sub chasers came out to circle ship on anti-submarine duty. On the 13th we circled the island to other side to get ready to take on a little bunker coal. Passed a school house about 9:30 and all the little British kids sang, "The Yanks Are Coming." Seemed nice to be serenaded by the children as we passed. On March 14th, we sailed at 7 A. M. from Bermuda for Norfolk, Virginia at 17 knots. Arrived Hampton Roads on 16th and proceeded to the Norfolk Navy Yard. U.S. battleship Oklahoma in dry dock all painted in camouflage colors ready to go to Scapa Flow, Scotland, for war duty. March 23 went to Philadelphia, took on soldiers and readied for our third trip to France with troops. Sailed on 29th for New York where we fell in with U.S.S. Northern Pacific and U.S.S. Mount Vernon early in morning off New York and headed for Brest without escort. On April 6th we fell in with a convoy of six destroyers and three other troop ships. At daylight on April 7th we arrived at Brest. Received SOS from S.S. Campbell saying it was torpedoed. It sank while he was still sending SOS. April 8th we sailed from Brest with

the U.S.S. Northern Pacific escorted by destroyers Wadsworth, Jarvis and Winslow. On April 13 received two SOS calls from torpedoed ships. At 3 P.M. destroyers left us and we put on more speed and headed for the U.S.A. April 14th we separated from the Northern Pacific. They took a northerly course and we headed a little more southerly. On April 16th about an hour after dark the Captain decided to try out all search lights. We had just turned them on when the British cruiser H.M.S. Cornwall signalled us and wanted recognition signals. We didn't know any other ship was nearby. Presume he thought we might be a German raider.

April 20, 1918, arrived at transport docks in Hoboken, New Jersey, thus finishing my third trip to Brest. Radiomen Reed and Miller transferred.

April 26th. After loading bunker coal and taking on troops we sailed for Europe shortly after dark with all troops below decks. U.S.S. Northern Pacific and Von Steuben making speed as we have no escort.

May 1st shortly after dark Northern Pacific lookouts reported seeing submarine on the surface on their starboard beam. By the time their fire control gave the order to fire, sub was out of sight. However our lookouts and theirs reported two torpedoes making a run on them and us. Torpedoes passed ahead of them, then astern of us. Next morning we received word that another ship had sighted another sub in same area.

(NOTE: On January 20, 1920 I was on the destroyer Ballard #267 escorting the U.S. transport Buford to Finland with 260 Anarchists and Communists that were cleaned out of U.S. prisons and being deported to Russia. When we got through the Kiel Canal we stopped at Kiel, Germany so the Buford could clean boilers. While there, a German Navy Commander came aboard and was visiting in the Wardroom, telling about the ships he had sunk during the war. He mentioned that he almost sunk the Kronprinz Wilhelm (the U.S.S. Von Steuben). The captain had me come down to talk with him. He described us and a two-stack transport (Northern Pacific), gave the approximate dates, etc. I confirmed this from my entry in my log. Congratulated him for his poor marksmanship.)

May 3rd. We contacted destroyer Wadsworth and arranged rendezvous with it and four other destroyers. All quiet until we arrived couple or three miles off French coast next morning when we ran into heavy fog. Destroyers couldn't see landmarks so we could enter harbor through mine fields so we headed west, maneuvering by radio in the fog. Finally able to enter harbor at 2:30 P.M. U.S.S. Leviathan at anchor in harbor having brought over 12,000 troops. My brother's ship in port. Talked to him with yardarm blinkers. Next day received SOS SSS from S.S. Serein, crew taking to lifeboats.

May 7th. Sailed for sea after dark in company with Northern Pacific and Siboney and three destroyers. Next morning we received SOS SSS from S.S. Quito, a British ship, saying it was torpedoed and sinking. Soon after received SOS from S.S. Kasbeck saying it was being shelled. Position 100 miles directly ahead of us, on our course. Later word was passed for all hands to be on sharp lookout for survivors of Kasbeck as we believed it was probably sunk. At midnight our destroyers left us to escort an inbound convoy into Brest. Not a thing sighted.

May 10th. We reached the 30th longitude and all ships proceed west alone. Later got message from Washington that ship shelled by sub in mid-Atlantic. Immediately resume full gun and lookout watches. Northern Pacific short ways ahead of us and Siboney astern. Was notified that I had passed exams and was now rated as Electrician First Class (Radio) as of May 1, 1918.

May 11th. Sighted Northern Pacific and forged ahead of her, making good 20 knots.

(Continued on Page 28)







# RAY ZERBE'S LOG

(Continued from Page 27)

May 12th. Met U.S.S. Goerge Washington, U.S.S. De Kalb and U.S.S. America headed east with troops. Mother's Day.

May 14th. Dropped a couple 300 pound depth mines for practice. Makes lots more explosion that the 60 pound ones we formerly had.

May 15th, 1918. Arrived Hoboken 7:30 A.M., making fastest passage so far in our four round trips to Brest. Chief Radioman transferred ashore leaving me in charge, with only one other rated man that is capable of standing a watch when we are in charge of a convoy, maneuvering by radio, copying schedules from NAA Washington, copying distress calls, etc. Navy Yard brought aboard a new two-step amplifier to use.

On May 27th, 1918 got underway from New York, with troops, in a heavy fog. Worked radio all day and night with troop ships that had sailed from Boston and Philadelphia. Finally fell in with British troopship Ulua in heavy fog. Radioman on there sent ship's name on ship's whistle so we could recognize it, as couldn't see it.

May 28th. We finally fell in with U.S.S. Siboney, U.S.S. Henderson, U.S.S. Huron, U.S.S. Mongolia, U.S.S. Tenadores, U.S.S. Mallory, U.S.S. Mercury, U.S. destroyer Sigourney, Italian S.S. Vauban, French S.S. America, and the armoured cruiser U.S. S. North Carolina. The North Carolina turned the convoy over to us, wished us Bon Voyage and headed back to the States. Later received coded message from ship that had gun battle with submarine, and wanted to join eastbound convoy. We maneuvered by radio all night and on May 29 all ships held target practice most of the day. Destroyer Sigorney taking on fuel oil from the Navy Transport U.S.S. Henderson while keeping underway.

May 30th. Decoration Day. Divine services held on all American ships in convoy.

June 2, 1918. Steaming slowly eastward. Received SOS SSS from ship that was being shelled by submarine, off Cape May, New Jersey.

June 5th. Worked radio with destroyer Davis, flagship of destroyers coming out to meet us.

June 6, 1918. Celebrated my 24th birthday by being in war zone. At 6:30 A.M. our escort of six destroyers met us and formed protecting circle. Now ten troopships and seven destroyers in convoy. We took moving pictures of convoy which is probably largest troop convoy to date. Fine weather and smooth seas. In evening four more destroyers joined us. A third class operator and I standing watch and watch while rest of rated men listen in for practice to see how fleet maneuvers are held by radio, and to get more experience.

June 7th. Late in afternoon convoy is split into two convoys. Von Steuben, Henderson, Hurok, America and Mongolia going to Brest with six destroyers, including U.S. destroyer Fanning which recently sank its first submarine.

June 8th. Arrived at Brest at 10:00 A.M. Bands serenade us, Franch and English sailers wave and cheer troops as we steam into port. Received news that the U.S.S. President Lincoln, an American troop transport, sunk off Brest after leaving Brest on her way to the States. We unloaded airplanes and troops.

## S.S. GEORGE WASHINGTON — DKN

Launched 1909 by NGL, 25570 Tons, 723 Ft. Long; 78 beam 50 draft. Passenger accommodations over 2000. Interned at New York in June 1914 siezed by U.S. April 4, 1917 and converted to troop transport without change of name. Call letters changed to NEC. Sailed as the SS CATLIN briefly 1940-41 for the British but sold for scrap 1951 after being destroyed by fire in Baltimore.



June 9th. My brother's ship came into port escorting convoy up French coast. Talked to him with search light. He told me a friend of mine was on the President Lincoln, which was sunk by a sub, but he got back into Brest O.K.

June 10th. Just before we sailed for sea my brother, Howard, had sent semaphore message to ship wishing me a safe trip home. Sailed at dark in company with transports America and Mongolia escorted by three U.S. destroyers. Next evening at dark our destroyers signaled Bon Voyage and returned to Brest. We immediately put on speed and headed for New York. We have several passengers aboard, including a U.S. General, a couple Colonels, wounded soldiers, nurses, about 300 French sailors going to the U.S. to bring back sub chasers, also about 300 British sailors for transport to States.

June 13th, 1918. Ship's siren blew submarine warning for submarine sighted on our starboard side. General Quarters sounded and dropped one 300 pound depth mine. Was on watch so don't know what they saw, or where.

June 14th. At about 30 degrees longitude we sailed through a lot of floating debris. Lookouts and crew told to keep sharp lookout for possible survivors or bodies. None spotted. "A mystery of the sea."

June 15th. At 7 A.M. we met a suspicious looking vessel. Captain ordered all guns trained on it. When we got closer it answered our recognition signals, so all O.K. Skipper thought it might be a German submarine mother ship. At 10:30 A.M. we sighted a suspicious object so fired two high explosive shells at it. Didn't see it any more, but we started to zig-zag as a precaution. In afternoon we sighted a ship headed for us, acted erratic so trained all guns on it. When it got closer it answered our Allied Recognition Signals. Captain Yates Sterling, an old time navy captain taking no chances.

June 16th. Our fresh water condensers salted up and we ran out of potable water. Salt water coffee for rest of the trip. Ugh!

June 17th. Washington radio sending warning for all ships to be careful in American waters as submarines reported active in the region.

June 18th Sea smooth with occasional rain squalls. At 1:00 P.M., ship's time, lookouts reported seven lifeboats on the horizon. We headed for same. We were about one mile from them when lookouts reported torpedo headed for ship, and immediately afterwards reported periscope in center of lifeboats. We started firing high explosive 5" shells at periscope. People started jumping overboard from the boats so we had to cease firing as sub too close to lifeboats, afraid we would kill occupants of the lifeboats. Turned our stern to boats and second torpedo reported headed our way. Periscope now clear of boats so our after 5" guns opened up with high explosive shrapnel again. He submerged then. Only had up steam for about 15 knots, se weren't leaving scene very fast.

Captain sent Communication Officer to radio room with following SOS message which I broadcast twice. "SOS SOS SOS SSSS SSSS 3842 N 6119 W torpedo missed ship Von Steuben. Same position apparently 7 boats under sail from sunken ship."

(Continued on Page 29)





(Continued from Page 28)

While sending SOS there was a violent explosion and we thought this is it, "Swimming Call." A second submarine had come up exposing his conning tower momentarily right close to starboard side of the ship and we rolled a string of 300 pound depth mines off the stern as he submerged again. Due to our slow speed our ship took quite a jolt. We kept going and saw no more of either the sub or boats. Impossible to pick up survivors with two subs waiting to sink us. Only two torpedoes launched at us. Captain wanted to know if anyone answered our SOS, told him no. Repeated SOS to BZR Bermuda radio. Right away all our East Coast radio stations started to repeat our SOS. Our crew marvelous, no one seemed to be bothered, guess a person can get used to anything. "Oh for the life of a sailor." Just before dark we met a full rigged sailing ship headed toward position where we were attacked by two submarines. Looked suspicious, might be a mother ship for German submarines. We circled it making recognition signals, no response. Gunnery Officer wants to fire on it but permission not given.

June 19, 1918 - 6:30 P.M. ship's time. I came into the radio room and the operator on watch said he had just sent an SOS up to the bridge and the vessel which sent SOS was real close (loud signal). I looked at copy of SOS and our position under glass on radio operating desk and knew right away that the SOS position was wrong, so relieved the operator on watch. Shortly SOS started again. It was the passenger ship Advance of United Fruit Company on its way from Colon, C.Z. to N.Y. with passengers, and it was being chased on the surface by a German submarine. Captain Sterling said when he received the SOS, they might sink them by torpedoes, but not by shell fire while near us. He immediately ordered a course set for the Advance which was quite close, doubled the lookouts and sent Communications Officer to radio room. I sent and received about 25 messages in plain language to the Advance, getting course, speed, and telling them we were coming to their aid. About time we got near them the sub which must have been copying us, probably figured we were evidently a destroyer and submerged before we could get within sight, so we turned away and headed for New York.

June 20th. Arrived New York about 9:30 A.M. and entered transport docks in Hoboken.

June 22nd. Admiral Gleaves, Commander of Cruiser and Transport Forces Atlantic, came aboard and made a speech to crew. Said he was proud to talk to such an efficient crew and congratulated us for our ability to escape from two submarines when we were so close to them. He then shook hands with all 1,200 of us.

June 23, 1918. The U.S.S. Siboney came into port and docked across dock from us with two boat loads of the survivors from the British ship Dwinsk that we had attempted to rescue. Found them a couple days after we tried to rescue them. They reported that a squall had come up that night and they had lost the other five lifeboats. They were all under sail. (A LATER NOTE: Couple days later two boats sailed into Gulf of St. Lawrence and were rescued. Other three boats never seen again. Survivors on Siboney told us that after we had left the scene one sub came to surface and quizzed survivors but the other sub, which was about 400 feet long, was never seen again. They thought we had probably sunk it with our depth mines. Hope they are right.) A Chief Radioman Charles A. Lindh came aboard for duty. This started a friendship that lasted for 60 years until his death in 1978. He was one fine person.

June 30th. Sailed for sea in company with several other troop ships, strong convoy consisting of two airplanes, one dirigible, several SC boats, two destroyers, four torpedo boats and U.S. cruiser Frederick. About 25 ships in all including escort.

July 1, 1918. U.S. cruiser Seattle came in sight with more of convoy and some destroyers. Got the convoy in formation, then the Seattle headed back to the States. Ships now in the convoy are Von Steuben, Callahan, Henderson, Mongolia, Siboney, Calomares, Mercury, Huron, President Grant, Nadawaska, Tenadores, Mallory, Kursk, Zelandia, America, Italian ship D'Abruzzi, destroyer Rathbourne, and four escorting destroyers and cruiser Frederick. Just awhile before dark the U.S.S. Mercury sighted what appeared to be a periscope and fired on same. One of the destroyers went to the scene and started dropping mines. We turned away from convoy and headed for scene intending to drop mines. Frederick ordered us to return to convoy. Shortly everything quieted down and other ships returned to convoy.



July 2, 1918. Received SOS from merchant ship S.S. Vienna saying it had run on rocks with 1,400 troops aboard. American merchant ship answered call and started for rescue. Heard SOS SSS call but unable to make out ship or location due to signals and interference of other signals. In afternoon destroyer spotted floating mine and picked it up. Later navy transport Henderson caught fire in forward hold. Just before dark we were ordered to stand by her and remove troops and most of the sailors, while convoy proceeded on. Destroyers Paul Jones and Mayrant transferred passengers between Henderson and Von Steuben taking all night to accomplish same. We were well lit up making an excellent target for any enemy submarine which are quite active in this area. Eight persons are unaccounted for, including three Marines and one sailor from the Henderson. We now have 1,500 additional people from the Henderson in addition to our own troops and crew. Getting quite crowded. One destroyer stayed with the Henderson to take off rest of crew in case it had to be abandoned. Received SOS from U.S. merchant vessel being chased by sub.

July 4, 1918. Now eleven or twelve hundred miles east of New York, Maybe we will fire on a sub to celebrate.

July 5, 1918. SOS from the S.S. Lakebridge being shelled by sub, about 100 miles astern of us. No further word as to what happened. Von Steuben proceeding alone as convoy too slow for us with our crowded condition and shortage of food and supplies for extra passengers.

July 6, 1918. Received SOS SSS from S.S. Nevasa, a British ship, saying it is being shelled. Her position is ahead of us about two hundred miles. We should go through same position about daylight tomorrow.

July 7, 1918. In evening worked with the destroyer Wadsworth that is coming out to escort us into Brest. Received ALLO(submarine position message) too close for comfort.

July 8, 1918. About 6 A.M. we were joined by destroyers Wadsworth, Ericson and Winslow. About 10 A.M. one of the destroyers sighted what it thought was a periscope preparing to make attack, headed for scene and started dropping mines. One of other destroyers turned back and also dropped depth mines, in all about twenty ash cans dropped. Destroyers signaled us that subs had been very active in this area lately. We put on additional speed. About 7 P.M. I took SOS from Mars saying it was torpedoed, think it might be U.S.S. Mars, a naval collier.

July 9, 1918. Came into Brest harbor with our escort and dropped hook at 7 A.M. Everything looked nice as we came up harbor, fields all nice and green. When we arrived in harbor our escorting destroyers sent us a bridge signal saying the day before, just before they dropped the mines, that a torpedo had run across ahead of them and passed astern of us.

July 10, 1918. Our crew caught a German spy aboard the Von Steuben today. He was in U.S. Navy uniform and confessed he had been aboard both the U.S. troop transports Covington and President Lincoln when they were sunk by German submarines. He was very young and could speak several different languages. Was put in the brig.

July 11, 1918. Young spy turned over to French authorities, was probably shot at the Chateau in Brest.

July 12, 1918. Took aboard several high ranking army officers, several nurses, and the Greek Ambassador to the U.S. accompanied by his wife and several small children. Just as we were sailing for sea, escorted by five destroyers, we met my brother's ship coming into port with a slow convoy of freighters. About thirty miles from port we met the convoy coming into port that we had left New York with, very heavily convoyed by about 15 U.S. destroyers. About an hour afterwards we received an ALLO message of a submarine in position just outside Brest. Imagine the convoy we met had an attack. Just before dark we spotted a periscope about 1,500 yards off port beam. We immediately started firing and did some fancy zig-zagging. Shortly after dark I heard a submarine working radio with code message. Imagine he was reporting our course and speed to another sub. Gave copy of code message to Skipper. Later met another convoy that was headed east. Received SOS from the S.S. Cape Breton.

(Continued on Page 30)





### U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA — NCE

Commissioned June 12, 1916. Rebuilt from cage to tripod masts 1931.



#### U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA

As Flagship of the Fleet, in 1938, under the San Francisco Bay Bridge. Note CinCUS' blue SOC on Turret Three. Appearance since altered considerably—see below. First U. S. warship fitted with all triple turrets, PENNSYLVANIA had cage masts when completed in 1916. Rebuilt in 1928-1931, tripods replaced her cages, secondary battery raised one deck, old casemates plated in. Geared turbines drive her four screws. ARIZONA, long Flag of Battle Division One, was destroyed at Pearl Harbor. One bomb down the funnel exploded her boilers and forward magazines. Much of her gear and armament has been salvaged for further use.

In dry-dock when the Nips hit, PENNSYLVANIA was damaged slightly, repaired soon after the attack. In 1942 she was rearmed with twin-mounted 5-inch AA's, numerous 20 and 40mm guns. Her old 5-inch-51 secondaries were removed. Stub after controls replaced her tripod mainmast. Catapult removed from third turret. Now probably carries only two seaplanes. Officially released photographs show that other old battleships have been rebuilt. None are identified officially. Broadside photographs restricted. Some ships, reengineered and reboilered, turn up extra knots. All are better, tougher ships than they were before the war. Note tricky stacks on the flush-decker moored alongside the PENNSYLVANIA.



U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA, 1943—Unofficial identification. Official Navy Photo

### BATTLESHIPS (BB)

#### ONE SHIP: PENNSYLVANIA CLASS OF 1912

Ship	No.	Builder	Ordered	Keel Laid	Launched	First Comm.
PENNSYLVANIA.....	38	Newport News S. B. Co.	Feb. 25, 1913	Oct. 27, 1913	Mar. 16, 1915	June 12, 1916
ARIZONA.....	39	New York Navy Yard	June 24, 1913	Mar. 16, 1914	June 19, 1915	Oct. 17, 1916

### USS ARKANSAS — NBV



As she appeared in early 1942. Through 1937-1941 ARKANSAS, NEW YORK and TEXAS formed Battleship Division Five, Atlantic Fleet. Last of eight 12-inch gunned U. S. Dreadnaughts, ARKANSAS carries twelve 50 caliber 12's in six twin-mounts. WYOMING, partially disarmed under the Treaties, mounts six 12-inch guns—as ARKANSAS less Turrets Three, Four and Five. She serves as a training ship (AG17). Both sisters have geared turbines driving four screws. Rebuilt 1925-1927. Converted to oil-burn, one stack, one cage mast removed. During a recent overhaul ARKANSAS was fitted with a tripod foremast, additional AA's. Note catapult on Turret Three; range-finders on Turrets Two and Five. The old UTAR, long used as a Target Ship, was sunk at Pearl Harbor. She has been salvaged. Five older Dreadnaughts were scrapped. See below.

#### OLDER BATTLESHIPS AND BATTLE CRUISERS: RECLASSIFIED, LOST OR SCRAPPED

No.	Name	Tonnage	Speed	Battery	Comm. Str.	No.	Name	Tonnage	Speed	Battery	Comm. Str.
23	ARKANSAS	13,000	17.11	4-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1914	23	MINNESOTA	13,000	17.11	4-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1914
24	IDAHO	13,000	17.12	4-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1914	24	IDAHO	13,000	17.12	4-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1914
25	NEW HAMPSHIRE	16,000	18.16	6-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1923	25	NEW HAMPSHIRE	16,000	18.16	6-12"/45, 8-8"/45	1906-1923
26	SOUTH CAROLINA	16,000	18.86	8-12"/45, 22-3"/50	1910-1924	26	SOUTH CAROLINA	16,000	18.86	8-12"/45, 22-3"/50	1910-1924
27	MICHIGAN	18,700	18.79	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1910-1924	27	MICHIGAN	18,700	18.79	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1910-1924
28	DELAWARE	20,000	21.56	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1910-1924	28	DELAWARE	20,000	21.56	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1910-1924
29	NORTH DAKOTA	21,011	21.01	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931	29	NORTH DAKOTA	21,011	21.01	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931
30	FLORIDA	21,885	22.08	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931	30	FLORIDA	21,885	22.08	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931
31	UTAH (AG16)	21,041	21.04	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931	31	UTAH (AG16)	21,041	21.04	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1911-1931
32	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	32	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
33	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	33	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
34	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	34	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
35	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	35	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
36	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	36	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
37	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	37	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
38	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	38	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
39	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	39	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
40	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	40	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
41	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	41	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
42	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	42	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
43	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	43	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
44	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	44	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
45	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	45	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
46	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	46	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
47	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	47	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
48	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	48	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
49	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	49	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
50	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	50	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
51	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	51	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
52	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	52	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
53	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	53	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941
54	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941	54	ARIZONA	22,000	22.00	10-12"/45, 14-5"/50	1916-1941

The heavier ships of the New Navy, authorized since 1886. Armored Cruisers that bore State Names are listed on page 49. Smaller Monitors, unlisted, were classed as BM's. The TEXAS, renamed SAN MARCOS, was expended as a target in 1911. With Battleships 1 through 4 she fought the Spanish in 1898. Sixteen ships, BB22 and under, went round the world. Through BB25 they wore bow-crests and the paint of The Great White Fleet when first commissioned. Old 23 and 24 were sold to Greece. KEARSARGE exists as a Craneship. Old BB7 berths Reserve Middles as the PRAIRIE STATE. BB47, 49 through 54, and the four CC's were scrapped by Treaty.

## ZERBE—CONTINUED

(Continued from Page 29)

July 17th. In afternoon overhauled small steamer headed west. Was a wake astern of her that appeared to be a submarine running partially awash following her. Signaled fact to her and proceeded on our way. Passed two sailing ships about sunset, surely pretty sight in the semi-darkness. Saw ship on horizon that looked suspicious, started zig-zagging and headed for her, giving recognition signals. Ran around her and finally decided she was friendly, so proceeded on our way.

July 21, 1918. At 4:20 A.M. arrived off Ambrose Lightship, took on pilot for New York. Pilot informed us subs had been very active off New York, also they had sunk the U.S.S. armored cruiser San Diego. At 7 A.M. came alongside Pier 1, Hoboken, thus completing our 6th round trip to Brest.

August 17, 1918. After repairs to ship and dry docking and having short range wireless telephone installed on ship we were again ready for sea. Took aboard 3,200 soldiers and Marines for passage to France.

August 16, 1918. Sailed for sea at 4:30 P.M. in company with U.S.S. George Washington and U.S.S. America escorted by destroyer Walke, airplanes and dirigible. Received SOS from S.S. Army down coast quite a ways, saying it was being chased by a sub. About 7 P.M. cry was passed, "Man overboard." We dropped life ring for him and semaphored destroyer to pick him up. Destroyer reported man O.K., no injuries.

August 19th. U.S.S. George Washington fired three 5" shells during night. Destroyers could find no trace of sub, no torpedoes sighted. Probably some one dreaming.

August 21. Destroyers headed back for New York leaving us troopships to proceed alone. Weather cold, wearing a sweater.

August 23, 1918. Received War Warnings from Azores saying subs reported off Colon, C.Z. They sure get around.

August 24th. Coming up from dinner this evening I met a Marine I used to be shipmates with on the Battleship Arkansas in early 1917.

August 24th, 1918. About 4 P.M. met five destroyers to take us into Brest. Maneuvered by radio at night.

August 27, 1918. About 9 A.M. three French airplanes and French dirigible came out to escort us into Brest. Came to anchor in Brest at 11 A.M.

August 30th. Large captured German submarine came into port carrying French crew and flying French flag. Had two large caliber guns mounted on it.

Frances B. Sayre, son-in-law of President Wilson, came aboard for passage to the States, and gave the crew off duty a nice talk. He is wearing a YMCA uniform. Sailed for sea in company with the George Washington and America, convoyed by five destroyers and five French airplanes plus the diri-

gible. My brother's ship came into port as we sailed. Second trip in that we have failed to connect for a visit. At 10 P.M. received SOS from the S.S. Onga saying she has been torpedoed, her position about 50 miles south of Land's End, England. At 11:30 P.M. just before I went off watch I received second SOS from the S.S. Nyovansa saying it was under attack by submarine. Her position about 300 miles west of us. We should be there in another fifteen hours. We might pick up some survivors.

August 31. Started day right by receiving SOS from the U.S.S. Milwaukee. Her position west of us and slightly to the north. A destroyer dispatched to the rescue. Received an ALLO message of submarine close to us. During night destroyers left to join another convoy bound for France, leaving the George Washington, America and Von Steuben alone.

Sept. 1st. Church services with all hands either carrying or wearing life preservers, a funny sight for church. America separates from group.

Sept. 2nd. Bridge sent signal to the George Washington asking permission to put on more speed and proceed alone. Their passengers objected, saying if they were torpedoed they wanted us handy to pick them up. We get a negative reply.

Sept. 3rd. Captain again asks permission to leave the George Washington, so we can speed up. Granted, so we speed up and by nightfall the George Washington just a speck on the horizon astern of us. We have now caught up with the America and passed it. Received position of submarine ahead of us. Wonder if the George Washington passengers are shaking in their boots.

Sept. 5th. Received news by radio of the destroyer Patterson sinking a sub on U.S. Coast. Mr. Sayre gave us a talk about Italy and the war spirit of the Italians. Still rolling and pitching heavily. Several days rough seas.

Sept. 6, 1918. Storm getting worse and by 9 A.M. it was at hurricane force, and seas big as mountains, towering above ship as we roll sometimes breaking over boat deck. Impossible to set up mess. Take a sandwich in one hand and hang on with the other. At 10 A.M. first man reported overboard, then at regular intervals cry was passed, "Man overboard." All told, six men went overboard. One poor sailor hung onto our log line for five minutes while another sailor tried to pull him in. A big sea broke over the fan tail and took him also. Ammunition chests broke loose, also other objects and flew up and down the decks, seriously wounding two or three sailors. I saw a friend of mine about two hundred feet from ship hanging onto an empty 50 gallon drum. Impossible to launch a boat in such seas.

Sept. 7, 1918. Seas like a mill pond this morning. Ship a mess. Our passengers starting to show up again. About 4:00 P.M. met a strongly convoyed group of merchant vessels coming out of New York. Board of Inquiry convened to discuss loss of men overboard, muster shows six men lost. At 6:30 P.M. took on pilot at Ambrose Light and came all the way up the harbor to Hoboken at 20 knots so we could dock before dark. Completed my seventh round trip to Brest

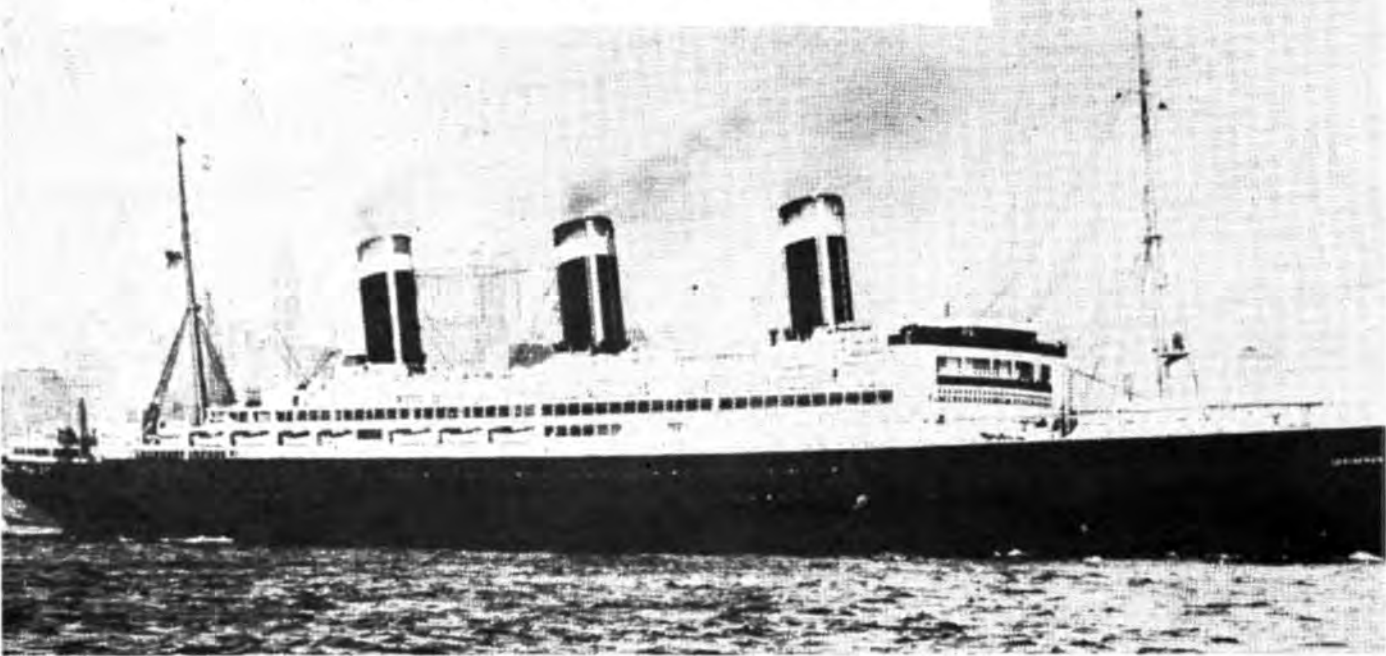
(Continued on Page 32)





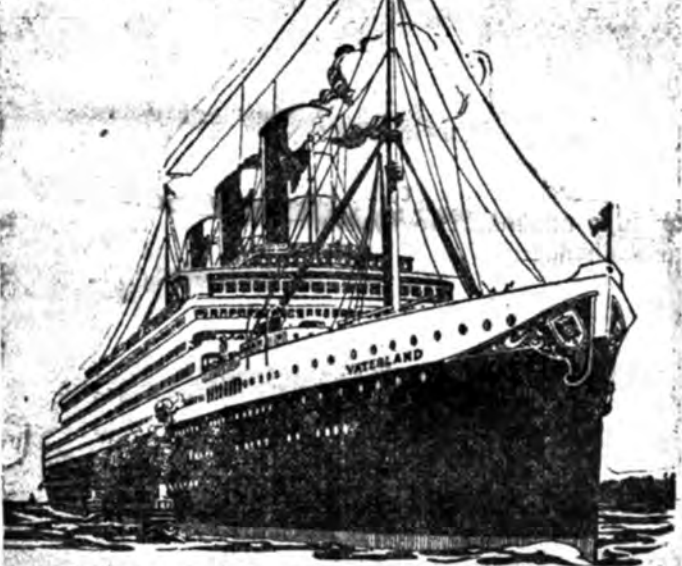
**S. S. LEVIATHAN**  
Ex GERMAN LINER VATERLAND

**S.S. LEVIATHAN**



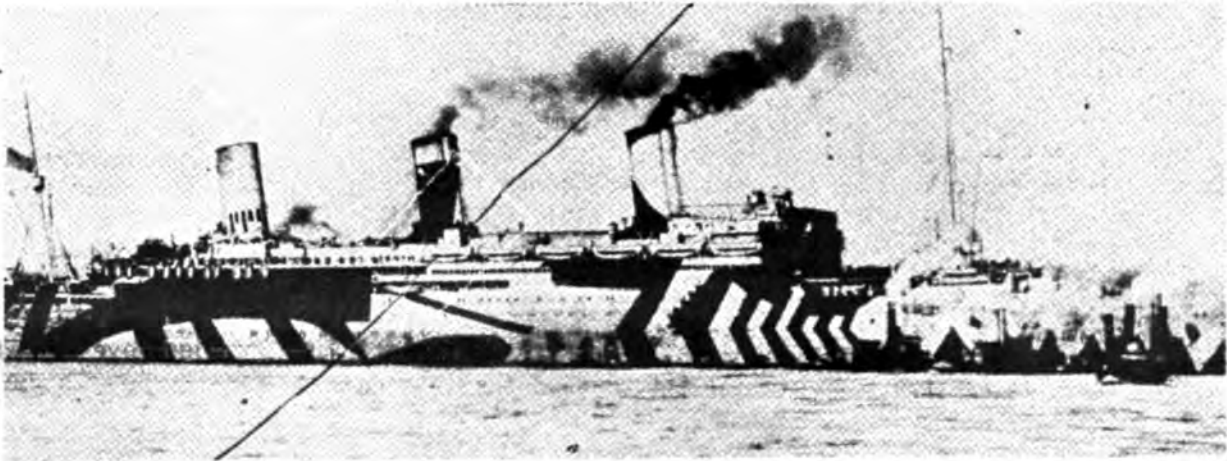
The USS LEVIATHAN (ex-Vaterland) as a troop transport. Commissioned into American service on July 27, 1917, LEVIATHAN, because of her draught of over 37 feet was assigned the New York to Liverpool and Brest runs, carrying over 119,000 fighting men to Europe in ten turnabout crossings.

**THE SEA GIANT**



**"VATERLAND"**

WORLD'S LARGEST SHIP  
58,000 Tons    950 Feet Long    100 Feet Beam  
ON HER FIRST TRIP  
Will ARRIVE in New York MAY 21st  
**SAILS**  
**MAY 26th, 10 A. M.**  
and regularly thereafter  
FOR  
**PARIS—LONDON—HAMBURG**  
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WAR CAMOUFLAGE DRESS — USS VON STEUBEN



PACIFIC MARINE REVIEW







## ZERBE—Continued

## 13 BLACK CATS !

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Sept. 9, 1918. Captain Yates Sterling relieved of command by Captain Miller. Captain Sterling was well liked by crew and was given a big cheer by all when he left ship.

Sept. 10th. Signal Quartermaster McVitty, one of sailors lost in hurricane, intended to be married this trip in. His intended bride, not knowing he was lost at sea, came aboard to meet him. She was very much shocked by the news. Part of 13th Regiment of Marines, commanded by Colonel Smedley Butler came aboard carrying thirteen black cats as mascots. One of the troops was Marine Lt. Daniels, son of Secretary of the Navy Daniels. Next day Secretary of the Navy Daniels came aboard and made a nice speech to the sailors and Marines. He left the ship at 1:30 P.M., serenaded by the band.

Sept. 15, 1918. Sailed for sea from Hoboken at 1 P.M. in company with troopships Matsonia, cruiser Louisville and destroyers Murry and Paul Jones, also two hydroplanes and dirigible which stayed with us till dark.

Sept. 16th. Talked to Matsonia and Murry on our new short range radio telephone, my first experience communicating by radio other than by telegraph. Received radio from British ship saying it had sighted an enemy submarine about daylight short ways astern of us. Met troop transports Maui and Grant headed for New York.

Sept. 17th. Destroyer Murry left us and headed back for New York. In afternoon we met the U.S.S. Leviathan headed for New York.

Sept. 18, 1918. Had target practice with all guns. In afternoon in latitude 42 N, longitude 48 W sighted large iceberg. It is rather far south for this time of year.

Sept. 19th. About 10 A.M. we were about to meet a ship when we noticed it starting to fire her bow gun. We then noticed a wake that looked like conning tower of a submarine ahead of her and a little astern of us. We immediately opened up with the four 5" guns on our port side, firing high explosive shells. The cruiser Louisville also started firing, making three ships firing on one lone submarine. Some fun. Action only lasted a couple minutes until submarine disappeared from view. When merchant vessel was over on the horizon astern of us it started firing its stern gun and continued firing as long as we could see it. It sent out no radio signals for help. Soon afterwards we met a destroyer headed that way, apparently attracted by the firing. We are having an epidemic of Spanish influenza aboard the Von Steuben.

## FLU SWEEPS TROOP SHIPS

Sept. 20th. A Marine Lieutenant died of influenza. About 300 Marines sick with it. Two more Marines on verge of dying; Sky Pilot standing by them. Received SOS from S.S. Mina saying, "Submarine fired torpedo that missed ship."

Sept. 21st. This morning two more Marines died of influenza, in evening another Marine passed away.

Sept. 22nd. Crew stretched canvas under shelter on boat deck forward from radio room and filled it with cots for a hospital. Can't leave or enter radio room without going through hospital filled with sick Marines. Seven hundred now reported down with the flu. Think we should paint red crosses on the stack and call us a hospital ship. Ship rolling heavily, have to hang on with one hand and eat my meals with the other hand, and at that my breakfast got loose from me. Very bad weather for all the sick. They not only suffer from the flu but from sea sickness. I feel sorry for them. Six more Marines died during the day. Worked radio with the U.S. destroyer Connors arranging rendezvous for tomorrow.

Sept. 23rd. Six Marines and one of ship's crew died during the night. Met our escort of five destroyers at 8 A.M. U.S.S. Louisville and ourselves immediately broke away from the Matsonia and put on full speed so we could get our sick ashore to a hospital as soon as possible. A Marine Lieutenant and five Privates died during the day, making a total of twenty-one persons dead on the ship. All our coffins are now filled. U.S. destroyer Fanning shoved off from convoy and headed for Brest, short of fuel oil.

Sept. 24th. Four more Marines died during the night. At daylight received an ALLO message of submarine about four miles from us. Would be an awful calamity were we to be torpedoed now with all the sick aboard our ship. Sea smooth enough this morning so we could set up mess tables, first time in couple days. Have had nothing but sandwiches and coffee for two days. Arrived Brest at 6 P.M.

Sept. 25th. One Major and five Marines died during the night, making the total dead thirty-one persons, including two of crew. All troops went ashore this A.M. on lighters. My brother's ship, the U.S.S. Harvard, came into port. He waved to me as they steamed past. Talked to him by searchlight after dark. He also is a radioman, so we use a lot of radio jargon in our talks, frustrates the signal men. In afternoon hospital boat came alongside and took off all our sick troops. About four hundred stretcher cases. My brother's ship sailed for four days of patrol duty outside harbor. We took aboard coffins and one corpse from the Fanning for transportation to the States. One of crew fell overboard during the night and drowned, his body not recovered.

Sept. 29th. Took aboard several nurses, three Army Generals, several YMCA personnel and the St. Louis Quartet for passage to the States.

Oct. 1st. About eleven A.M. a large convoy of troop ships sailed for the States. At noon we sailed with following troopships: Martha Washington, Matsonia, Calamares, Pocahontas, escorted by destroyers Connors, Monaghan, Jarvis, Erickson, Warrington, Burrows, and Nicholson. We soon overtook the other convoy and passed them before dark.

Oct. 2nd. Maneuvering by radio before daylight, received couple ALLO's and an SOS from the S.S. Nyzam, a British ship. She has been torpedoed but did not sink. At 7:30 P.M. the destroyer Escort Commander signaled us, "Good luck and God bless you" and all destroyers immediately left us. Received a couple more SOS calls during night, subs very active in this area.

Oct. 4th. Woke up to find we had left rest of troopships and had put on speed for the States. In evening lookouts reported periscope at 5,000 yards, we increased our speed for a few hours. Received two new ALLO messages and an SOS from the S.S. Paulsboro, an American merchant vessel.

Oct. 5th. Seas getting very rough, vessel pitching badly. Sailor was washed overboard during the night. Received information that 1,500 men in convoy with the armored cruiser North Carolina have died of influenza.

Oct. 6th. Confirmed that a man had been washed overboard two nights ago. Seems like we are a hoodoo ship for losing people over the side.

Oct. 9th. About 10 P.M. we sighted lights on Sandy Hook and Ambrose Light vessel.

Oct. 10th. At one A.M. we came to anchor just outside submarine nets outside New York, not allowed to pass through nets at night as danger of sub following us through into harbor. At daylight proceeded up harbor to Hoboken transport docks, thus completing my eighth round trip carrying troops and acting as ocean escort to troop convoys.

Oct. 16th. Sailed for sea about an hour before dark in company with the U.S.S. Agamemnon convoyed by destroyer Perkins.

Oct. 17th. Received SOS from ship torpedoed some ways ahead of us. Sea very calm.



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Oct. 18th. Destroyer Perkins returned to the States during the night.

Oct. 19th. Sea has become very rough, ship rolling and swinging badly. Sandwiches and coffee the menu of the day. Troops not eating as poor souls mostly all seasick.

Oct. 21st. Sea has calmed down considerably. U.S. merchant vessel Muskogee about 200 miles ahead of us being shelled by sub. No one answers the SOS so imagine sub will get her. We will pass through its position before daylight.

## "POZ"—Calling Washington !



HISTORICAL WORLD WAR I PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RECEIVING ROOM OF POZ, NAUEN, GERMANY. ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL STATIONS. 1917

Oct. 22nd. Copied message from POZ-Nauen, Germany to President Wilson in answer to Wilson's last note. First time the U.S. has worked radio direct between Sayville, L.I. and Nauen since war was declared. British vessel Oxfordshire sending SOS, under attack by German sub. Her position 100 miles northeast of us. Would be great if we were to be sunk right on the verge of an armistice.

October 23rd. Received ALLO from British merchant vessel. Worked a code message with our future escort.

Oct. 24th. Passed our destroyers during the night and are now east of them, so turned back west to meet them. Lots of rumors amongst crew and Marines as to why we are again headed west. Finally destroyers spread out and located us and we are again on course for Brest. Escorted by destroyer Benham, flagship of four other destroyers. Copied message to Nauen, Germany from New Brunswick, N.J. in answer to their last message to President Wilson.

Oct. 25th. One of our escorting destroyers lost convoy during night and is now getting direction finder bearings so it can rejoin us. French airplane and dirigible came out to help escort us into port, arriving there at 5:30 P.M. My brother Howard came aboard to visit me before sailing down the coast with a freighter convoy.

Oct. 30th. Coaling ship and taking aboard wounded troops all day, also crew from a torpedoed ship for transport to the States.

Oct. 31st. Received news that Turkey had signed an armistice with U.S. Allies.

Nov. 1st. Received news that Austria-Hungary had surrendered to the Allies, but think it is probably just a rumor. Sailed for sea at noon escorted by destroyer Benham. Just as we got to sea the steering gear on the Benham jammed and she nearly rammed us. Submarines very inactive and Benham returned to port right after dark and we stopped zig-zagging. At 10:31 P.M. received an SOS from ship that didn't give name, trouble or location. Later received SOS from the S.S. Heresby saying it was aground off Brest.

Nov. 3rd. Intercepted message from POZ-Nauen, Germany to New Brunswick asking for U.S. election returns to be forwarded to her for U.S. Prisoners of War.

Nov. 4th. Armistice between Turkey and Allies takes place at 3 P.M. today.



Nov. 5th. Sunk a floating mine by gunfire.

Nov. 6th. Passed two ice bergs quite a ways south of us.

Nov. 7th. One day out of New York. Received word that Austria-Hungary had really signed an armistice with the Allies.

Nov. 8. Arrived New York harbor just after dark and came to anchor off Statue of Liberty.

Nov. 9th. Germany given 72 hours to sign armistice terms as laid down by President Wilson.

Nov. 10th. Von Steuben proceeded to Morse Dry Dock for much needed repairs and overhaul.



CORNER OF THE TRANSMITTER ROOM AT NAUEN, GERMANY 1914

## This is THE DAY !

Nov. 11th. At 5 A.M. was wakened by ship's band playing, whistles blowing and crew cheering. Word that German Kaiser and Staff had gone into exile in Holland. At 2 P.M. I was given ten days' leave and started for Grand Central Station. People ashore going crazy, young girls kissing soldiers and sailors. Left Grand Central Station for Wichita, Kansas at 6 P.M.

Nov. 21, 1918. Arrived back aboard ship from leave after being held up in Pennsylvania by a train wreck.

## Assigned 'Big George'

Nov. 30th. Received orders to report aboard the U.S.S. George Washington for temporary duty in connection taking President Wilson to France to attend the Peace Conferences. Left Von Steuben at 4 P.M. and proceeded to Hoboken, N.J. George Washington all cleaned up preparatory to receiving our distinguished guest. Four radio stations aboard to keep him in touch with Washington during trip. All radiomen are picked men from various places.

Dec. 1st. Admiral Gleaves aboard on tour of inspection. Everything in rush getting organized for the trip. Pathe News camera men aboard taking pictures of the Radio Gang for release on Pathe movies in the theaters. Newspaper men aboard looking for a story and interviewing anyone that would talk to them.



(Continued on Page 34)





**USS AEOLUS — NEF**

Former German Liner Grosser Kurfurst — DKG, converted to troop carrier during WW-I. Later returned to passenger service as the SS AEOLUS — KOZC (Munson Line) from New York to Buenos Aires. Later sailed for LASSCO as "CITY OF LOS ANGELES" between Los Angeles and Hawaii and on cruise trips around S.A. Editor Breniman spent 18 months on "KOZC"

(Continued from Page 33)

Dec. 2nd. A sound-proof booth has been constructed in main radio room in which we receive all radio messages for the President. Two First Class Radiomen arrived from Washington to help man booth. I served on the radio gang on the U.S. Flagship Pennsylvania in 1916 with both men. Another First Class man from the Transport Service also picked, and myself to fill out the crew of four radio operators who will rotate watches and receive all official messages to the President.

Dec. 4th. Testing special receiver that is installed in booth, with NAA high powered arc station at Annapolis, Maryland. Three other men and I will copy all messages to President on this receiver. About 200 special officers came aboard vessel, and all crew members called to muster in afternoon while special officers searched vessel for possible bombs, guns, etc. At same time Secret Service Agents were looking over crew to see if they recognized any potentially dangerous characters. They quizzed several of the crew as to their past. Guess they can't be too careful as President will be quite exposed on the ship. President due to leave Washington late at night on the yacht Mayflower for Hoboken.

## President Wilson 'piped aboard'

Dec. 5th. President and Mrs. Wilson arrived aboard at 7:30 A.M. for passage overseas. They were accompanied by Admiral Cary P. Grason, USN, his personal physician, Secretary of State Lansing, and several other notables, including Italian Ambassador to the United States with his family. At 10 A.M. President and Mrs. Wilson came on the bridge as we were getting ready to get under way. At 10:15 we reversed engines to back away from dock and were off for France. About two dozen movie men were on dock and in small boats as we got underway. All whistles blew and lots of cheering and waving from shoreside as we proceeded down harbor. The U.S.S. Pennsylvania and twelve destroyers escorted us to sea. Parvane mine sweepers were rigged on our ship as we went out of harbor and proceeded to sea. They sure are being careful.

Came into formation as we passed Ambrose Lightship, Pennsylvania leading and six destroyers on each side of us. Handling a lot of official messages on our receiver and ships' operators handling messages on low power for other members of peace party. Sent in long press reports for the newspapers, and it was sure a lot of malarky. Heard the President talking on the Wireless Phone with Admiral Mayo on the Pennsylvania. Mrs. Wilson released carrier pigeons which started back to Washington.

Dec. 6th. Small sea kicking up, held Abandon Ship drill, saw the President with life preserver on, "same as you or I." President's traffic to and from the States very heavy, almost continuous reception. Outgoing traffic is sent to the Pennsylvania by Wireless Phone and put on Arc Transmitter there for NAA Washington. Three other operators and I rotate watches, receiving all incoming messages. A dispatch ship will leave convoy tonight for New York with messages they figure are too confidential to be sent by radio, even in a secret code. No doubt all communications being copied by the Germans to find out if possible any advance information on the upcoming peace conference in Paris. Weather kicking up, sea getting rough. Presidential Party may get some sea going weather yet. Copied a thousand words of special press addressed to the President, also a message asking that a condemned man's death sentence be commuted to life imprisonment. Went to movies and saw President and Secretary of State Lansing. President getting quite gray. Mrs. Wilson and the Italian Countess visited the radio room this afternoon. They were quite impressed with all the apparatus we have to keep them in touch with the world. The Countess is a nice looking young girl about 20 years old. Seven destroyers left for the States, leaving five with us.

Dec. 7th. Saw the President and Mrs. Wilson on the boat deck. She was apparently trying to show him the way to the radio room but had forgotten the way. I saluted the President and he returned the salute. I then volunteered to show them the way. After showing them the apparatus, the special booth where we copied all his messages and the Wireless Phone, he thanked me and gave me a big salute and a cheery smile. He seems like a real down-to-earth person. Later when I was on watch copying official messages, Captain McCauley started talking to the Pennsylvania on the Wireless Phone. His voice was interfering with reception so I told the phone operator to ask him to get off the phone, as he was breaking up the reception of traffic to the President. Phone operator said he took it quite well. I really expected to be called to bridge and get chewed out.

Sunday, Dec. 8th. Went to church this A.M. and had the honor of sitting about 15 feet from the President and Mrs. Wilson. They seem to be very democratic and all the time quite cheerful and happy. In afternoon the President and Mrs. Wilson were taking a walk on boat deck and about a dozen sailors with cameras were taking pictures of them. They seem to be very gracious about posing for the sailors, and joined in with the sailors laughing and full of smiles. Later the official photographer for the President took pictures of the radio gang, then took movies of us. That night we had movies and a singsong in the crew spaces and were surprised when the

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**U.S.S. VON STEUBEN — NACC**

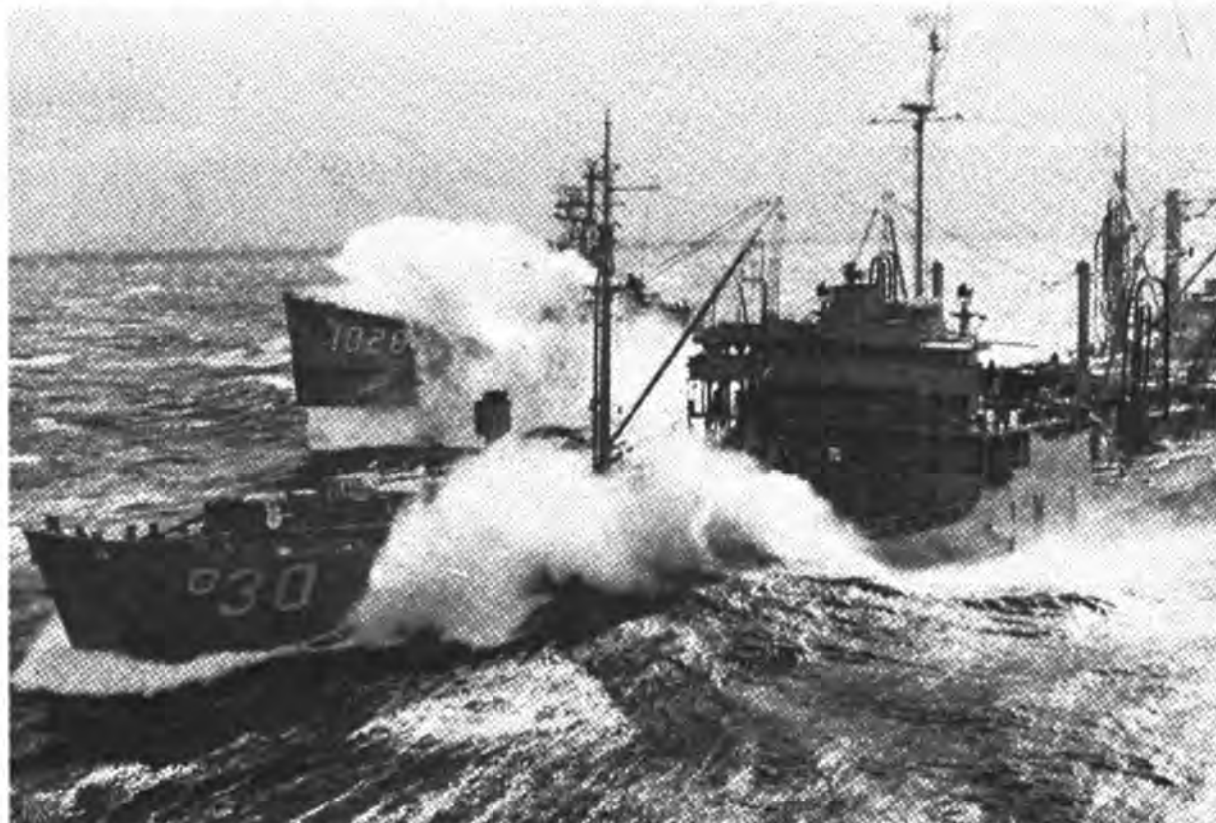
The U.S.S. "Von Steuben" with Three Thousand Fighting Men on Board. Six Hundred Feet in Length - Displacement 15,000 Tons. The Cruiser Transport sailing from Navy Yard Philadelphia on third trip to France Oct. 29, 1918. The ship will meet U.S. Transport Mt. Vernon and Northern Pacific off New York and act as Ocean Escort for them on way to France.

— R.W. Zerbe Collection.





USS VON STEUBEN  
November 1917. Effect of collision at sea.



(Continued from Page 34)

President and Mrs. Wilson with other notables showed up and joined in. Had one song about Woodrow (President Wilson's given name) that pleased him immensely when crew started singing it. At close of show when "Good Night" was put on the screen the President stood up and announced that he wished to shake hands with everyone. He was all smiles while shaking hands, and every time I met him on the boat deck he always smiled all over his face. I don't know how he did it. When he first came aboard there were always about six Secret Service men walking with him. Now he is always alone and we never see them. Guess he feels quite safe here.

Dec. 9th. Woke up to find that three more destroyers had returned to the States during the night, leaving us with the Pennsylvania and two destroyers. In the afternoon we had boxing, and a pie eating contest. Later one of the destroyers came alongside and dropped 300 pound depth mines for the President's benefit. Radio gang were photographed by Animated Weekly News Magazine for showing on moving pictures at movie theaters when we get back to New York. Smooth sea and warm as we near the Azores. Mr. White, an elderly diplomat, addressed the crew. Said he was in Germany when the Kaiser was a little boy and was personally acquainted with him, but was now going over to wreck his government with their idea of ruling the world. Said this will be the seventh International Conference he has attended. He seems to be a very nice old gentleman.

Dec. 10th. In the morning we were met by five more destroyers that escorted us around the Azores. Passed close in to Punta del Gado so the President could get a close view of the U.S. Naval Base there. They fired a twenty-one gun salute as we passed and we answered in kind. A Portuguese warship fell in with us and fired another twenty-one gun salute so we answered in kind. The Azores High Commissioner sent the President a greeting message and he answered it. We then started northeastward towards the French coast. We now have the Pennsylvania and seven destroyers escorting us. We are kept busy in the booth copying messages from Washington for the President.

Dec. 11th. President watching the Pennsylvania sinking paper balloons with anti-aircraft fire. Destroyers long way ahead of us releasing them. In evening had a show in main mess hall with sailors dressed as girls. President evidently enjoyed it from the expression on his face.

## Lights—Camera—Action

Dec. 12th. Movies taken of the crew with the President and Mrs. Wilson, who then posed for everyone in the crew to take pictures of them. Worked radio with the honor escort that is coming out to meet us.

Dec. 13th. At daylight a lot of U.S. destroyers fell in with us. About 9 A.M., when about fifty or sixty miles off the French coast the following battleships fell in with us, the U.S.S. Arizona, Oklahoma, Nevada, Wyoming, Arkansas, Florida, Utah, Texas, and New York, plus the Pennsylvania, which comprised the newest and best battleships in the American Navy. They have all been based at Scapa Flow, Scotland, helping to keep the German High Fleet bottled up. We now have the ten battleships and 35 U.S. destroyers escorting us. Most, if not all the destroyers have escorted the cruiser transport Von Steuben during the war, and a number of them have gold stars painted on smoke stacks certifying they have sunk German U-boats. The battleships all fired

a twenty-one gun salute and formed columns on our flanks as they joined us. In about two hours we were met by three French battleships and ten French destroyers. French shore batteries fired another twenty-one gun salute as we passed them and we answered in kind. We then passed down the line of battleships with them playing the Star Spangled Banner as we passed them. Reached our anchorage in Brest and the following came aboard, President Poincaré and Premier Clemenceau of France, General Black Jack Pershing, Admirals Sims, Rodman, Mayo, Wilson, and two other admirals that I couldn't recognize, also several French Generals, and also several other notables that I couldn't recognize. They all stayed aboard until 3 P.M. when they left for the beach. There were three cheers from the crew for the President as he left the ship and we fired a twenty-one gun salute to him. Very impressive indeed. Before the President went ashore all the destroyers passed in review with the crews in dress blues. Secretary Lansing left for beach after the President and we fired a 19-gun salute for him. Cannot ascertain yet as to whether brother Howard's ship, the Harvard, is in port. He will be surprised when I contact him as he does not know that I am on the George Washington for temporary duty. French set up a miniature "Statue of Liberty" shoreside and lit it up after dark. Crew coaled ship all night after notables left. preparatory to sailing for the States.

Dec. 14th. In afternoon we took aboard four thousand troops for passage to the States. None of them have been up to the front. Battleships sailed for the States after their prolonged stay in Europe. All had great, long "Homeward Bound" pennants streaming out from the main masts.

Dec. 15th. At 1:30 P.M. we up anchor and sailed for the States. Seemed peculiar not to have escort of destroyers and gun crews standing at the ready with all guns loaded.

Dec. 16th. Everything quiet, but sea very rough and heavy fog for a couple days. Making 17 knots and no zig-zagging. Arrived Hoboken on Dec. 23rd amid cheering, and whistle blowing, as salute to returning soldiers.

Dec. 26th. Atlantic Fleet arrived from France and was accorded big welcome. Anchored in Hudson and were greeted by Secretary of the Navy Daniels.

Jan. 1, 1919. Still in port making repairs to George Washington. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt came aboard for passage to France, also Charles M. Schwab, also French and Japanese diplomats and several other notables.

Jan. 2. Sailed at 6:30 A.M., very quiet departure, raining lightly.

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Destroyer "Reid"—One of the swiftest vessels in the U. S. Navy.



## Zerby's Log

(Continued from Page 35)

Jan. 6th. Assistant Secretary of Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt inspected crew and ship.

Jan. 8th. Seas very rough, none of passengers in sight except Chinese and Japanese Admirals we have aboard. They seem to have their sea legs.

Jan. 10th. At 6:30 A.M. was escorted into Brest harbor by destroyer Lea. My eleventh time in Brest. Passengers started debarking at 9 A.M.

Jan. 11th. Took aboard 3,000 troops and 1,000 wounded, plus 50 nurses, and various naval men for passage to the States. Sailed at daylight next morning, seas very rough outside, troops, nurses, etc., mostly all seasick. Too bad.



### "WELCOME HOME"

Jan. 21st. Arrived Hoboken at noon and shoved off on five days' leave, after completing my eleventh trip to Brest.

Jan. 26th. Received order to report back to Von Steuben as it was about finished with repairs. Reported aboard at 54th Street, Brooklyn.

Feb. 17th. Shifted Von Steuben to Brooklyn Navy Yard and remained there until 28th, then to transport docks at Hoboken and started coaling ship and getting ready for sea. Finished installing 20 KW Federal Arc Transmitter after all night session. Took aboard 8 million dollars and much mail for our expeditionary forces in France. Sailed at 9:15 A.M., weather and seas calm and very nice at sea. Swinging ship in afternoon and calibrating new direction finder that has just been installed.

Mar. 10th. Arrived off French coast in heavy fog. Taking direction finder readings every half hour as we are quite near the beach. Arrived Brest 3:30 P.M.

Mar. 12th. Technicians aboard to tune up radio phone. Was told the U.S.S. Harvard is due in Brest any day now to have 5 KW set installed. Three former German destroyers, four submarines and one cruiser in port manned by Japanese. Subs diving for practice.

Mar. 13th. Heard Howard on the Harvard working FFK Brest. At 1:00 P.M. Harvard stood in from sea, called Howard on wireless phone but couldn't raise him, guess they are off watch. In evening talked to him on yard arm blinkers for a good two-hour visit. Next afternoon I got special pass and went aboard the Harvard. They are due to sail to Danzig, Germany in couple days. (NOTE: Didn't know it at the time but I wasn't to see my brother again until July 1923 in Bremerton, Washington where he was stationed on Navy high power radio.)

March 15th. Sailed for States at 10 A.M. with 3,000 troops. Choppy outside and about half troops too sick to eat lunch at noon. Standard speed 18 knots.

### 'Clearing the hook'

March 19th. Received SOS from U.S. transport Sapinero saying taking on water and in danger of sinking. Several ships headed to rescue. Troops filing free messages to relatives at home. Have about 600 on the hook to send. Keeping the spark gap hot.

Mar. 20th. I broadcast an SOS call for the S.S. Melrose who is having rudder trouble and afraid of capsizing.

Mar. 21st. Now about 600 miles off U.S. coast and unloading our commercial traffic direct to NAH-New York Navy Radio.

Mar. 23rd. Arrived transport docks Hoboken at 11 A.M., completing my twelfth trip to France.

Mar. 30th. Took aboard five million in gold packed in five boxes for transfer to our forces in Europe. Sailed at 9:30 A.M.

April 7th. Arrived Brest at 7 A.M. and at noon I left for Paris on liberty.

### Liberty ! QRD PARIS !

April 8th. Arrived Paris at 5 A.M., had breakfast and transferred to another railroad station to go to Chateau Thierry, arriving there at 10 A.M. Railroad station and all surrounding buildings badly damaged by rifle and artillery fire. Further up in city most of buildings demolished by artillery fire. After lunch about six Von Steuben sailors and I hired a Frenchman with a horse-drawn bus to drive us to Belleau Woods. This is where the U.S. Marines turned the Germans who were driving for Paris, the German's first real setback in the war. Belleau Woods, a thick wooded area, was practically shot to pieces by the German field guns that were, and still are, in place along road at edge of woods. The woods are full of shell holes that were used as temporary graves for dozens of American Marines. Identification tags tied to rifles with fixed bayonets stuck in the ground. I lost 12 Marine friends in this battle whom I had served with on the Pennsylvania and Arkansas before the war. German dead buried in the ditches along the road with tags tied to rifles stuck in the ground. Many gruesome sights still around battlefield. In afternoon caught train back to Paris.



April 9th. Went to see the great war painting, "Pantheon de la Guerre" of the late war. Climbed about a third of the way up the Eiffel Tower before the gendarmes saw us and ran us off. Saw statue of "Joan of Arc." Went to a fashion show in evening, first one held since the war.

April 10th. Left Paris on train at 7:30 A.M. for Brest, arriving there at 10 P.M. and went aboard the Von Steuben.

April 11th. Woke up at 8 A.M. to find we had sailed for States and were well at sea. General Pershing's Headquarters band aboard but too seasick to give us any music.

April 18th. Arrived New York and discharged wounded and other passengers, after an uneventful trip.

April 24th. Underway at 3 P.M. Very few passengers aboard.

April 28th. Lots of icebergs in area. Hope we don't hit one and lose the five million dollars in gold we have aboard. Arrived Brest on May 2nd, at 5 A.M.

May 4th. German passenger ship Imperator, flying white armistice flag, arrived Brest manned by Germans and escorted by two U.S. destroyers. As soon as it anchored, U.S. Naval crew went aboard and assumed command. German crew returned to Germany on U.S. destroyers.

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S.S. IMPERATOR — DIT  
Renamed SS BERENGARIA 1921, Dismantled in Scotland 1946.



(Continued from Page 36)

May 5th. We have 3,100 troops aboard from the 32nd Division for passage to the States, including 600 wounded. At 1:30 P.M., the U.S. Navy formally took over the S.S. Imperator, hoisted the colors at the staff, and commission pennant on the main mast. At 3:30 P.M. we up anchor and sailed for the States, 18 knots standard speed. Notified I had passed exams as Chief Radioman as of May 1st so moved into Chief's quarters.

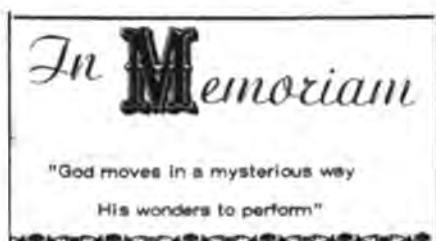
May 13th. Arrived New York at 2 A.M., moved to Pier 3, Hoboken, and debarked wounded and well troops. Started coaling ship immediately.

May 17th. Captain Miller relieved by Commander Horn as Captain of Von Steuben.

May 18th. Sailed at 1:30 P.M. for Brest, several Army Officers aboard. Arrived Brest on May 26th.

May 28th. Big parade in Brest today for U.S. Navy sailors. Many had French decorations for bravery. In afternoon, French sent a delegation out on S. C. (Submarine Chaser) boats to cheer troop transports. Ex-German U-boat (submarine) circled around Von Steuben. It had two large wicked looking guns on her.

May 29th. Sailed for New York at 1 P.M. with troops and wounded aboard.



May 30th. Decoration Day. At 10 A.M., the ship was stopped and ceremony was read for those that have lost their lives doing their duty on the Von Steuben during the war. Seventeen of them all told. Chief Quartermaster West answered "Aye" as their names were read. A wreath was cast on the water, then we got underway for the States.

June 6th. My 25th birthday. Arrived in Hoboken at 8:30 A.M.

June 10th. Took aboard 1,000 soldiers for duty with Army of Occupation in Germany. Chief Radioman Charles A. Lindh paid off from Navy, leaving me in charge of radio gang. Received three new men for radio gang.

June 11th. Sailed for sea at 5:50 P.M. arriving Brest on June 19th just prior to noon. No liberty as French sailors are in small revolution here in Brest striking for raise in pay of 5 centimes per day, approximately one cent U.S. currency.

June 21st. We were delayed sailing account French sailors' strike. Went ashore in afternoon, a strong French guard in front of National Bank.

June 22nd. Sailed at 10 A.M. for States. Heard brother Howard working radio, called him on spark transmitter but unable to contact him due to heavy interference.

June 30th. Arrived Hoboken in forenoon and discharged troops after uneventful trip, thus completing my 16th round trip to Brest.

July 8th. U.S. S. George Washington arrived back from Brest with President Wilson and docked alongside us. Good view of him. Our crew ashore for parade in New York led by him.

July 11th. Took five million dollars aboard for Army in France and Germany and sailed at 9:30 A.M. for Brest. Had contingent of French sailors aboard as passengers. Arrived Brest on 19th after an uneventful trip.

July 21st. Sailed with 3,000 troops for States. Admiral Wiley and an Army General on board for passage to the States.

July 27th. Received orders from OPNAV (Chief of Naval Operations) to meet destroyer Wilkes and carry on hydroplane tests. Tests O.K.

July 29th. Arrived New York.



# ZERBE'S Log

## USS COVINGTON

Torpedoed July 1, 1918, 100 miles off French Coast. USN Troop transport homeward bound. Four Navy men lost lives. Taking final plunge.

Aug. 4th. Sailed for Brest at 10:30 A.M. arriving there August 12th after an uneventful trip. At 5 P.M. I shoved off for a four day leave to visit battlefields at Fismes, Rheims, and Fort de la Pompelle which is nothing but churned up clay after four-year bombardment on the Hindenburg Line. In the evening I visited Fort Nogent, headquarters for Prince Henry, which is about 12 miles from Rheims, France. Went through all old tunnels and rooms filled with German grenades (potato mashers). Spent the night in Rheims. Went back to Paris and left that night for Brest arriving back aboard Von Steuben in afternoon.

Aug. 24th. Left for New York at 1 P.M. with troops. Arrived New York Sept. 1 and discharged troops.

Sept. 10th. Sailed for Brest at 2 P.M. On September 16th we received SOS from ship that hit a mine, too far for us to go to rescue.

Sept. 18th. Arrived Brest at noon, anchored close to the German submarine U-139, the sub that sank the S.S. Lusitania. German prisoners coaling Von Steuben.

Sept. 21st. Left Brest at 11 A.M. for the States with 2,900 troops from several different divisions. Arrived Hoboken on 29th, thus completing my 19th round trip to Brest. Getting ship ready to put out of commission as a U.S. Navy ship and turn it over to the Army Transport Service, to be manned by a civilian crew.

## Von Steuben becomes a U.S.A.T

Oct. 10th. Finished turning vessel over to Army, and Navy crew transferred, and all Duration of War Navy Personnel given their discharge. I was granted leave with orders to report aboard the U.S. transport George Washington for duty as Radioman in connection with taking King Albert of Belgium back to Europe.

## Reassigned 'Big George'

### —a touch of Royalty!

October 24th. Reported aboard George Washington for duty. On the 29th we took aboard high Belgium officials, the King's servants and big Pierce-Arrow automobile. In the afternoon we got underway for Hampton Roads, Virginia, arriving there at noon on the next day. Anchored off Hotel Chamberlain alongside an Italian battleship, which fired a seven-gun salute to us. The George Washington not being a flagship and no high ranking officials aboard did not return the salute.

Oct. 31st. At 1 P.M. King Albert and his Queen, accompanied by Crown Prince Leopold and his sister, the Countess, came aboard, accompanied by Brand Whitlock and his wife. When the King stepped aboard we fired a 21-gun salute and broke out the Royal Belgian Standard from the mainmast. We immediately got up anchor and headed for sea, escorted by the battleship Delaware and flanked on either side by six destroyers, and the Navy dirigible F1 and ten airplanes. After dark, the Queen set four carrier pigeons loose to return to Fort Monroe. Battleship and destroyers left during the night to return to port.

Nov. 4th, 1919. Received message from Washington giving us permission to go via the Azores and changed our course immediately. Have orders not to let anyone know we are bound for the Azores as the King wants to visit incognito.

Nov. 7th. Arrived off Fayal, Azores, then passed close to Pico, Azores. Mt. Pico is 7,000 feet high, snow capped and a beautiful sight. Ship's speed reduced so we wouldn't reach Punta del Gada, Azores until daylight on the 8th. Woke up to find we were anchored just outside the breakwater. The King, Queen, Crown Prince, and high ranking officers went ashore unannounced, returning just before dark. We sailed immediately for Brest.

Nov. 10th. Attended church services. King Albert and his Queen were there also. The King spends a lot of time on the boat deck walking and exercising.

(Continued on Page 38)



Zerby's Log

(Continued from Page 37)

Nov. 12th. Arrived off Brest at daylight and were met by two U.S. destroyers for escort into harbor arriving at anchorage about 7 A.M. At 10:30 Royal Party went ashore and we fired a 21-gun salute.

Nov. 14, 1919. I arranged a swap with radioman on the U.S. destroyer Ballard (267). Visited practically all ports on the North Sea, Baltic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, Aegean and Black Sea, then back to States for my discharge from the United States Navy on July 10, 1920 at New York, completing my 40th crossing of the Atlantic in the U.S. Navy. But my service on the U.S. destroyer Ballard #267, (NIGN) is another interesting episode in my life.

EDITOR'S ADDENDUM

At the start of WW-1 there were 104 ships of German Registry interned in United States ports with a total of over 300,000 gross tonnage. 13 of the ships were quite modern and of over 10,000 tons each. These ships were seized on April 6, 1917 by the U.S. German crews aboard, from date of internment to date seized, had sabotaged most ships. However, through the superior skill of the American Engineers most ships were returned to service in the fall of 1917 according to the following table:

DATE 1917	SHIPS (USS)	EX GERMAN S.S.	R-T Europe	TROOPS Carried
Sep 08	Huron (c)	Fredericks der Gross	8	20,771
Oct 18	Covington (TS)	Cincinnati	6½	21,754
19	Agamemnon (*c)	Kaiser Wilhelm II	9	36,096
19	America (*c)	Amerika	9	30,674
19	Pres. Lincoln (Ts)	-----	5½	23,425
19	Mt. Vernon (*T)	Kronprinzessin Cecile	9	33,540
19	Von Steuben (*c)	Kronprinz Wilhelm	19	
Nov 12	Madawaska	Koenig Wilhelm II		
12	Powhattan	Hamburg		
12	Aeolus (c)	Grosser Kurfurst	8	24,327
Dec 03	Geo. Washington	Geo. Washington	9	46,150
14	Antigone	Neckar		
14	Susquehanna	Rhein		
15	Leviathan	Vaterland	10	119,215
--	de Kalb	-----	11	11,334
17	Pres. Grant	-----	8	44,182
1918				
Jan 04	Mercury *	Barbarossa		
Feb 10	Martha Washington	-----	8	21,800
10	Great Northern	-----	10	27,900
10	Northern Pacific	-----	10½	21,963
--	Princess Matilda	-----	8	21,193
--	Pocahontas	-----	9	20,373

Legend

- (\*) Fitted with Standee Berths & stowable cots spring 1918
- (c) Were in collision with other ships during period
- (T) Torpedoed but made port
- (Ts) Torpedoed and sunk

The logistics of carrying 2½ million men in the A.E.F. is mind-boggling, especially when it must be recorded that the U.S. had only 7 ships at the start of the war (4 troop ships and 3 cargo) which were a drop in the bucket to needs. The Kaiser helped the United States defeat Germany by allowing so many German ships to fall in our hands - providing the capacity to move troops to Europe to fight the German war machine. Of course ships of most Allied Countries helped in the effort.

Following are the troop ships that were torpedoed and sunk during the war:

DATE	SHIP
Oct. 17	Antilles
17	Finland
May 31	Pres. Lincoln (26 casualties)
Jul. 01	Covington (6 casualties Torpedoed by U-88)
Sep. 15	Mt. Vernon (36 casualties ship made port)

After the war was over, Radio Officers on returning troop ships had their work cut out for them as each soldier aboard was allowed free messages home and on some ships there were as high as 4000 or more soliders. Think of the workout these men had, not to mention their counterparts at the shore stations, especially "NBD" which was well situated to attract the great volume of traffic that came their way. Other East Coast land stations, however, received their quota.

SHIPS & CALLS (\*) Radio Officer Zerbe

Contacted during his WW-1 Trans-Atlantic

Crossings of 20 Round-trips

SS ADVANCE/KMV	USS MAYRANT/NJU
USS AGAMEMNON/NEB	SS MELROSE/KZW
USS AMERICA/NED	USS MERCURY/NFK
SS AMERICA (FRENCH)	USS MILWAUKEE/NFB
USS ARIZONA/NBW	SS MINA
USS ARKANSAS/NBV	USS MONAGHAN/NKL
	USS MONGOLIA/NAGF
USS BALLARD/NIGN	USS MOUNT VERNON/NEB
USS BENHAM/NIJ	USS MURRAY/NAXK
SS BERGENSFJORD	SS MUSKOGEE/KIB
USS BUFORD/NADN	
USS BURROWS/NCV	USS NADAWASKA
	USS NEVADA/NCA
USS CALLAHAN	SS NEVADA/GBG (BRITISH)
USS CALOMERES	USS NEW YORK/NCC
SS CAMPBELL	USS NICHOLSON/NIU
SS CAPE BRETON	USS NORTH CAROLINA/NMN
USS CONNORS (CONNER)/NSN	USS NORTHERN PACIFIC/NKI
HMS CORNWALL	SS NYOVANSA
USS COVINGTON	SS NYZAM (BRITISH)
SS D'ABRUZZI/MAD (ITALIAN)	USS OKLAHOMA/NCB
USS DAVIS/NJF	SS ONGA
USS DeKALB/NSB	SS OXFORDSHIRE (BRITISH)
USS DELAWARE/NEK	
SS DWINSK (BRITISH)	USS PATTERSON/NOK
	USS PENNSYLVANIA/NCE
USS ERICKSON/NIS	USS PERKINS/NOX
SS ERNY/WLM	USS POCAHONTAS/NOU
SS HIRAM B. EVERETT	
	SS QUITO
USS FANNING/NFM	
USS FLORIDA/NFR	USS RATHBOURNE/NACR
USS FLUSSER/NFS	USS REID/NTU
USS FREDERICK/NJS	USS ROE/NTZ
USS PRES. GRANT/NFG	USS SAN DIEGO
	USS SAPINERO
USS HARVARD/NMT	USS SEATTLE/NAPG
USS HENDERSON/NOH	SS SEREIN
SS HERESBY	USS SIBONEY/NZM
USS HUOK (HURON?)/NFJ	USS SIGOURNEY/NAJB
SS IMPERATOR/DIT (GERMAN)	USS TENADORES
	USS TEXAS/NCO
USS JARVIS/NIB	
USS PAUL JONES/NOP	USS UTAH/NVR
SS KASBECK	SS VAUBAN (ITALIAN)
USS KURSK	SS VIENNA
	USS VON STEUBEN/NACC
SS LAKEBRIDGE/KBAI	
USS LEVIATHAN/NEJ	USS WADSWORTH/NKW
USS PRES. LINCOLN	USS WATKINS/NWL
USS LOUISVILLE/NABL	USS WARRINGTON/NWD
SS LUSITANIA/MFA (BRITISH)	USS GEO. WASHINGTON/NEC
	USS MARTHA WASHINGTON/NKJ
USS MALLORY/NADG	SS KRON PRINZ WILHELM
USS MARS/NJR	USS WINSLOW/NJA
USS MATSONIA/NCT	USS WYOMING/NWQ
USS MAUI/NEG	
MAYFLOWER/NJV	USS ZELANDIA/NBE
(PRESIDENT'S YACHT)	



"WELL DONE"

EACH CHEVRON STANDS FOR 12 MONTHS OF SERVICE IN THE WAR ZONE DURING WW-1. THIS PHOTO TAKEN BY "YE ED" ON THE S.S. HARVARD - WRH (EX NMT)





## Wireless Hall of Fame



— BY —  
 PROF. HERBERT J SCOTT  
 HISTORIAN

### Oliver Heaviside

Oliver Heaviside was the youngest of four sons sired by Thomas Heaviside, an artist of sorts. He was born in London on 18 May 1850. His mother was Rachael West whose sister, Emma, married Charles Wheatstone. Young Heaviside was entirely self-taught in the applications of higher mathematics to electrodynamics. He became an expert in mathematical physics and in the development of Maxwell's electro-magnetic theory and in the practical applications of this theory. He took a job as a telegraph operator from 1870 to 1874. After this he continued his research in mathematics and electrodynamics.

In the two year period from 1885 to 1887 he published a series of papers on operational calculus which firmly established his reputation as a mathematician. He saw operational calculus as important in the solution of electrical transients and he anticipated the use of Fourier and Laplace transforms in electrical circuit analysis.

Heaviside had serious disagreements with W. H. Preece with respect to long distance transmission over cables. Preece insisted that inductance in long distance cables should be minimized, and Heaviside maintained that it should be increased by adding inductance at intervals in cables to improve performance. Heaviside was shown to be correct by professor M. I. Pupin of Columbia University and by others.

He was the first one to demonstrate the "telegraphers' equation" which described the voltage along a transmission line as related to the distance along the line, the time of transmission and the resistance of the line. In addition he devised a system of electromagnetic units not greatly different from the MKS system.

Heaviside gave freely of his knowledge in helping scientists and engineers in the solution of intricate mathematical and physical problems. His home became known as "The Inexhaustible Cavity". He sometimes lacked money to pay his professional society dues. The Institute of Electrical Engineers, however, solved this problem by electing Heaviside an honorary member and awarded him its first Faraday Medal. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Göttingen.

Heaviside lived alone in Devon on a small government pension. Never having been married he died alone in a small seashore cottage in Torquay on 3 February 1925. He was buried at Paigton, Devonshire, England.



### Sir Ambrose Fleming

J. Ambrose Fleming, the son of a Congregational minister, was born in Lancaster, England on Nov. 29, 1849.

In 1853 his family moved to London. Here he carried out his schooling & received the Bachelor of Science degree from the University of London in 1870.

He entered Cambridge University in 1877 where he studied under J. C. Maxwell in the new Cavendish Laboratory, and in 1897 he received the Dr. of Science degree from the University of London.

Fleming was appointed the first Professor of Mathematics and Physics at University College in Nottingham in 1881. However, the following year, 1882, he left the University to accept a position as consultant and electrical advisor to the Edison Electric Light Company of London. When the Edison Company consolidated with the Swan Electric Light Company the following year, Fleming remained as its electrical advisor for the next ten years.

It was in 1885 while still a consultant for Swan Electric that he was appointed as the first Professor of Electrical Engineering at University College, London, and held this title for the next 42 years.

### Arthur Edwin Kennelly

Arthur E. Kennelly was born in COLABA, India on the 17th of December 1861. He was educated in England and the continent though he never attended a university. However, over the years he acquired an engineering education through practice and through independent study. His engineering interest was aroused by a lecture on the submarine cable by Latimer Clark.

Kennelly left school at the age of 14 to work as an office boy at the Society of Telegraph Engineers. A year later at the age of 15 he was hired as a telegraph operator for the Eastern Telegraph Co.

In 1887 at the age of 26 he left England and came to the United States. Here he accepted a job as one of Thomas A. Edison's assistants. In 1894 he formed a consulting firm along with Edwin J. Houston and continued activity in his specialty of submarine cables. In 1902 he was appointed a professor of engineering at Harvard University where he remained for the next 28 years until his retirement in 1930. Additionally he maintained a second appointment at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from 1913 to 1924.

Kennelly's major contribution to electrical engineering was the representation of alternating-current quantities by complex algebra. At this same time Steinmetz was also working in this same area. Kennelly published his first paper on the subject in 1893. Later on he extended Heaviside's representation of current and voltage in a cable by hyperbolic functions through the use of complex hyperbolic functions and introduced polar notation for the complex algebraic quantities.

Probably Kennelly's best known work followed Marconi's trans-Atlantic radio transmission. Here he maintained that the transmission was made possible by a discontinuity in the ionized upper atmosphere. At about this same time Oliver Heaviside, in England, and quite independently came to the same conclusion. Consequently the name Kennelly-Heaviside layer was given to this region which is now known as the ionosphere.

Kennelly was also instrumental in the adoption of the International Standard meter-kilogram-second (mks) system of units.

He received several honorary degrees and many medals during his active life and found time to publish 28 books and 350 technical and scientific papers.

His death came in Boston on the 18th of June 1939, at the age of 78.

On a visit to the United States in 1884, he met Thomas Edison and discussed with him the "Edison Effect" concerning the flow of current from a positive electrode to a negative cathode in an evacuated electric light.

In 1899 Fleming served as a scientific advisor to Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company and assisted Marconi in the design and construction of the high powered transmitter at Poldhu in Cornwall, England. It was this station which was used to span the Atlantic with the first wireless signal in December of 1901.

Following this, in 1904 Fleming invented and patented the two element "thermionic valve" for rectifying high frequency oscillations and hence serving as a detector of wireless waves. This device today we call a 'diode', and it was the first electron tube to be used in radio. Later workers in the field added other electrodes to this device providing us with the triode, tetrode, pentode, etc.

Fleming was awarded many honors during his lifetime for his outstanding and original work in the radio area. He was the recipient among other honors of the AIEE Faraday Medal and the Gold Medal of the IRE. In 1929 he was knighted and became henceforth "Sir John Ambrose Fleming".

After his retirement from University College, he was elected Professor Emeritus. During his lifetime he published some twenty scientific books and over one hundred important technical and scientific papers.

Sir John Ambrose Fleming died in Smidmouth, Devonshire, England on the 18th of April 1945 at the age of 96 after a remarkably productive life.

Heaviside - Kennelly - Hessenden - Houlson - Popoff - Ohm



# THE SPARKS JOURNAL

## PELORUS JACK

A Complete History of the Wonderful Pilot Fish of New Zealand

By WILL LAWSON

MANY extraordinary accounts have been published concerning Pelorus Jack, the dolphin which used to meet coastal steamers off Pelorus Sound in Cook's Strait, New Zealand. In almost all of these he has been described as a pilot of supernatural powers, and when the news of his disappearance and probable death was reported, no less fantastic were the causes of death suggested. The truth is that Pelorus Jack was a Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*). About fifty years ago a school of these white dolphins, which are rare in the southern hemisphere, frequented French Pass and Pelorus Sound, and it is presumed that Jack was the sole survivor; or it may have been that when the school departed for other seas, he stayed. At any rate, for over thirty years, to the knowledge of white men, this dolphin made a habit of meeting steamers at French Pass or Pelorus Sound and accompanying them between these points.

The beat of the propellers would be heard by Jack many miles away, and both for the sake of companionship with the bigger sea monsters and the opportunity of scraping barnacles off the keels and stems of the vessels, the white dolphin seldom missed a chance to meet the steamers. Even at night he would come out to play in the phosphorescent waters, like a ghost of the deep tides.

While the white man's history placed Jack's age at two score and ten, according to Maori mythology, Jack's age, when he disappeared a few years ago, was reckoned at 285 years. Even allowing for the longevity of the whale family, this seems an exaggeration. Still the Maori claim that Pelorus Jack was the atua or personal god of Matua-hautere, who was a descendant of Kupe, the Polynesian navigator who discovered New Zealand and showed the way to the emigrants from northern islands who settled in New Zealand. When Matua-hautere crossed the sea of Raukawa, as Cook's Strait was called, there went with him this god-fish. In the Maori story the dolphin played the part of pilot and led them into Pelorus Sound, where the tribe settled, and the fish lived in a cave near the mouth of the Sound. Whenever they went out in their canoes the fish led the Maori, often saving them from danger.

His greatest feat was when a chieftainess, Hinepoupou, swam from Kapiti Island to D'Urville Island, fully thirty miles away. Then Kaikai-a-warou, as the fish was called, left his cave and swam across the straits to meet Hinepoupou, whom he conducted safely to her destination. The story of this swim of Hinepoupou is true, for Maori women often swam long distances when driven by love or fear, and doubtless a sea monster, possibly Pelorus Jack, appeared during the swim and was hailed as a friendly god, for this happened in the later years of Maori history.



Pelorus Jack in action near the French Pass, New Zealand. Photo taken September, 1911, by Edgar Warwick.

For thirty years Pelorus Jack kept touch with the steamers. Then, during the war, he went amissing, and set everyone guessing as to the cause of his disappearance. About that time, a fleet of Norwegian whalers was working in New Zealand waters, and many people believe that they had accounted for Pelorus Jack.

When the carcass of a white dolphin, with a deep gash in its side, was found on a Cook's Strait beach, this idea began to crystallize into certainty, until Captain Post, commander of the government steamer Tutanekei had gathered and reviewed the evidence. Captain Post stated most emphatically that the wound in the side of the dolphin could only have been caused by the wing propeller of a twin screw steamer. The only vessel running at that time which could be connected with the dolphin's death was the Arahura, a fast coaster of 1500 tons and a favorite of Jack's, possibly on account of the thunderous noise her propellers made under water. Captain Post believes that in his gamboling Pelorus Jack lost his balance, as a man might in walking, and before he could recover and

When the white men's steamers came, Pelorus Jack devoted all his spare time to them, and eventually, so popular did he become, an Order-in-Council was gazetted on September 29, 1904, declaring him to be protected. The penalty for any interference with him was to be not less than £5 or more than £100. The direct cause of this proclamation was the action of passengers and fishermen, who sometimes tried to shoot the harmless creature. On one occasion it was claimed by a passenger on the old coaster Rotorua that he had struck Jack with a bullet from a rifle. He certainly fired several shots, and after that Pelorus Jack never showed himself when the Rotorua passed. This may sound incredible, yet the explanation is simple. The regular boats all had different beats of their propellers and an animal of the whale family would be intelligent enough to associate danger with the sound of the Rotorua's propeller.

One of Jack's favorites was the Pateena, a ship with a big single screw and a good turn of speed. It was thrilling, in the dusk, when the Pateena swept through French Pass and paused to land mails at Cabbage Bay, to see Pelorus Jack spout in the calm dark water, a cable's length ahead of the ship. There he would play till the first turn of the engines made the ship vibrate. Then, as swiftly as a bird, he rushed towards the bows and, while the steamer was gathering way, he rolled and turned and gamboled about the forefoot. At full speed he could never have done this, and as the speed increased the white dolphin's movements became swifter, till he moved like lightning, now on one side of the bow, now leaning against the stem, now on the other side, the water streaming off his glistening shape. Every now and then he "blew" through the foam of the ship's speed. He would keep this up for miles, till, off the Chetwode Islands, near Pelorus Sound, he would suddenly dart away into the dark depths, no doubt to seek his cave retreat.

dart clear the tip of one of the spinning propellers caught him and ended his interesting career.

But in the records of white New Zealanders, as in the Maori mythology, Pelorus Jack will never be forgotten. His name was a household word throughout the island dominion, and had it been realized in time that the carcass with the gash in its side was in all probability his, it would have been preserved and become a museum exhibit of undying interest.



## SPARKS JOURNAL

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### Whale of an Issue

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### Pioneer Wireless Women

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### Ray Zerbe's Log

The SCIENTIFIC & HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE EARLY DAYS OF WIRELESS